THE LIBRARY OF CONGRESS

. 96 25 Cts.

HARPER'S HANDY SERIES
Issued Weekly

Copyright, 1885,
ARPER & BROTHERS

OCTOBER 1, 1886

Subscription Price
per Year, 52 Numbers, $15

Entered at the Post-Office at New York, as Second-class Mail Matter

MARCELLA GRACE

An Irish Novel

BY ROSA MULHOLLAND

lady Gilbert

Books you may hold readily in your hand are the most useful, after all
DR. JOHNSON

NEW YORK
HARPER & BROTHERS, PUBLISHERS
1886

HARPER'S HANDY SERIES.

Latest Issues.

No.		CENTS.
58.	The Last of the Mac Allisters. A Novel. By Mrs. Amelia E. Barr.	25
59.	Cavalry Life. Sketches and Stories. By J. S. Winter	25
60.	Movements of Religious Thought in Britain during the Nineteenth Century. By John Tulloch, D.D., LL.D.	25
61.	Hurrish: A Study. By the Hon. Emily Lawless	25
62.	Irish History for English Readers. By Wm. Stephenson Gregg.	25
63.	Our Sensation Novel. By Justin H. McCarthy	25
64.	In Shallow Waters. A Novel. By Annie Armitt	25
65.	Tulip Place. A Story of New York. By Virginia W. Johnson.	25
66.	With the King at Oxford. A Tale of the Great Rebellion. By Rev. Alfred J. Church, M.A.	25
67.	Sea-Life Sixty Years Ago. By Captain George Bayly	25
68.	Doom! An Atlantic Episode. By Justin H. McCarthy	25
69.	The Choice of Books. By Frederic Harrison	25
70.	Aunt Rachel. A Novel. By D. Christie Murray	25
71.	Goethe's Faust. Translated by John Anster, LL.D.	25
72.	The Evil Genius. A Novel. By Wilkie Collins	25
73.	The Absentee. An Irish Story. By Maria Edgeworth	25
74.	If Love be Love. A Forest Idyl. By D. Cecil Gibbs	25
75.	French and German Socialism in Modern Times. By Richard T. Ely, Ph.D.	25
76.	King Arthur. Not a Love Story. By Miss Mulock	25
77.	The Head Station. A Story of Australian Life. By Mrs. Campbell-Praed	25
78.	Army Society. A Discursive Story. By J. S. Winter. Ill'd.	25
79.	Pluck. A Novel. By J. S. Winter	25
80.	Her Own Doing. A Novel. By W. E. Norris	25
81.	Cynic Fortune. A Novel. By D. Christie Murray	25
82.	Effie Ogilvie. The Story of a Young Life. By Mrs. Oliphant.	25
83.	Alton Locke. Tailor and Poet. By Charles Kingsley	25
84.	A Daughter of the Gods. A Novel. By Jane Stanley	25
85.	The Open Air. By Richard Jefferies	25
86.	The Fall of Asgard. A Novel. By Julian Corbett	25
87.	Katharine Blythe. A Novel. By Katharine Lee	25
88.	Bad to Beat. A Novel. By Hawley Smart	25
89.	A Playwright's Daughter. A Novel. By Annie Edwardes	25
90.	Our Radicals. A Tale of Love and Politics. By Fred Burnaby.	25
91.	A Wicked Girl. A Novel. By Mary Cecil Hay	25
92.	The Long Lane. A Novel. By Ethel Coxon	25
93.	Francis. A Socialistic Romance. By M. Dal Vero	25
94.	Baptized with a Curse. A Novel. By Edith S. Drewry	25
95.	Comediettas and Farces. By John Maddison Morton	25
96.	Marcella Grace. An Irish Novel. By Rosa Mulholland	25

Other volumes in preparation.

☞ Harper & Brothers *will send any of the above works by mail, postage prepaid, to any part of the United States or Canada, on receipt of the price.*

MARCELLA GRACE.

CHAPTER I.

HER MOTHER WAS A LADY.

In that part of Dublin known as the Liberties lived an old man named Grace with his daughter Marcella. The father, though an uneducated son of the people, had seen better days, had once been a master-weaver, and had married a lady. But the daughter never had seen better days; her mother, the lady, had been dead before she could walk, and all the good times were gone before she was aware of their existence. The old man had of late years gradually sunk to his original level, and consoled himself with a single loom and his pipe; and the daughter, while mending his clothes and striving to make him comfortable, had somehow grown into a woman.

They lived in a quaint old part of the Liberties known as Weaver's Square, a spot that reminded one of a dilapidated nook of some ancient foreign town, for the houses of dark brick were built with high-peaked fronts and flat, narrow windows, and had peculiarities of their own which marked them as of a different quality from the ruder and uglier dwellings that surrounded them. It was a place inhabited by poplin weavers ever since the establishment of the trade in the neighborhood by Huguenot settlers in the olden time. Tabinet weaving, once a flourishing art, is now on the wane and threatening to decay. Michael Grace had gone down with the trade, and was now dragged lower every day by the increasing infirmities of years.

The house in which they lived stood at the entrance to the square, and was larger than the rest, with some heavy stone-carving about the hall door, and massive sills to the windows. The dwelling had probably been at one time the country-house of gentlefolks, and had got built up to, and walled around, and had found itself caught in a net-work of foul streets, long left behind by its old frequenters. With the perpetual frown under its windows, and streams of damp on its walls, it had a brooding, weeping look which seemed ever to deplore its reverse of fortune. In his palmy days Grace had bought the old house and furnished it in a manner which he had considered splendid; and here he had brought his wife, who had never seen the neighborhood before, who probably had not liked it, and who here

had died. Marcella had been born in the house, and there was something about its aspect which seemed to harmonize with the character of the girl. In spite of its sad and lonesome air it had also its gracious aspect, and held the same relation to the other houses in the streets that Marcella occupied among the people, being one of themselves, though standing a little apart, and being a good deal the pride, and slightly the envy, of its neighbors. Its glory was a thing of the past, like the good-fortune of the Graces, for it had become so dilapidated that it was with difficulty the weaver and his daughter were able to make their home in a corner of it.

Yet, in spite of all difficulties, Marcella, by virtue of some gift in her eyes and fingers, contrived to make the dingy place something a little different from the ordinary of such homes. Strips of old amber tabinet, much faded with frequent cleaning, hung by the window, and other such contrivances, gave the room she lived in a character of its own. She would go without her breakfast to buy a penny bunch of spring flowers to place in the brown pitcher on the corner of the dark old loom that caught the sunlight as it fell through the window. Her floor was always scrupulously sanded and her fireside bright and swept. Neighbors who came to ask her help or advice could not tell what it was that made the old weaver's room so home-like. The walls were as crooked as other folks' walls, the ceiling as dark with age and smoke, and the light as scant, for it was not in the handsomer rooms of his house that he harbored in his latter days, nor had the Graces preserved any smart pieces of furniture to show that they had come down in the world. Housewives of the decenter order came and went away again perplexed. There was something in old Grace's room which they could not describe, and which they did not see when they went home.

Even from the outside, Marcella's window, when she happened to stand by it, would strike a stranger who might happen to be peering about the ancient street, and might wake in him—if he happened to be imaginative and a traveller—a memory of Italy. He had seen a richly-tinted face, a dark picturesque head, like the head of a Roman girl framed in a queer worm-eaten window-frame based by a sill with fantastic carving, and behind it a glow of yellow drapery had shone dimly through the shadows and glinted into the light. And if it chanced to be sunset hour, when the sunshine would suddenly cover one strip of the house, like the unfurling of a long red banner against the time-darkened walls, then deep unsuspected hues would come out of the weather-stained bricks, enhanced by the intensified shadows under the sullen brown window-frames, and in the cavernous chambers behind the sashes.

Certainly the Graces' room would not have been a cheerful one if any one else had lived in it, if Marcella had been allowed to go elsewhere to earn her bread, or if the fever had not spared her the last time it went its fiery way through the Liberties, burning up human life like chaff before flame. The better class of neighbors were aware of this, and would have been sorry to see her depart; for though she did stand a little aloof from them, it was only a little. Were

any one sick or in trouble, Marcella forgot her reserve. She was a credit to the street when she went out to do her scanty bit of marketing, for she walked with the step of a lady in her bonnet which was no better than their own. And why should she not do so, since her mother was a lady? In the girl's simple superiority there was little that could offend even the most envious or ill-conditioned. In spite of her unusual beauty she never interfered with the lovers of other girls; never had had one herself, and seemed willing to have none. Then she was useful to the mothers as a model to be held up to the daughters. Sometimes young wives did not like having her thrift made a reproach to them by cross husbands; but on the whole she was popular. The very old men liked her the best, and the young men least of all, the latter feeling awed by her gravity, and by a certain involuntary haughtiness in the carriage of her head which made them humble and awkward when (as on rare occasions) they happened to find themselves in her presence.

A damp winter afternoon was just closing, the thick yellow daylight fading in the street, and dingy lights springing up in the windows. In the weaver's room dusk was shifting gradually along the walls and through the panes, and, seeing it depart, a small fire began to find courage to burn, and darted little javelins of flame into the gloom, making the silent loom look like some ungainly ogre who was trying vainly to hide himself in the shadows of the corner.

Marcella put down her sewing and straightened her limbs, which were stiffened with the fatigue of sitting still. She had been at work since morning and had earned a shilling. She peered out before drawing the curtain across the window, looking anxiously for her father coming home. There was poplin on the loom which ought to be finished to-morrow. Why had he always forbidden her to learn to do his work? She stood before the loom gazing at it with bent brows, as at an enemy with whom she was powerless to grapple, while she thought of her terrible helplessness as a woman, and the urgent need of aid from some quarter, which she felt more and more as the days went by, and her father grew less inclined to work. And then the door opened and Michael Grace came in and sat down at the fire.

He was a tall old man, with arms that seemed loose at the joints, long, rugged features, and an indolent, not ill-humored expression of countenance, but with a warning spark smouldering in the corner of his eye which might easily be quickened into anger. He looked like one who would do a good turn if it cost him no trouble, but who would shirk a burden if he could. The world might slip away from his large limp hands if the holding it fast were to cost him much effort. And it had slipped away from him, taking with it his comfortable house, his workmen, his mastership, and many busy looms. But he was old now, and he had his pipe. Could he but live without toiling, he were content. It was slow getting money out of yonder weary old loom; but Marcella, the girl there, knew more about money than he did. She contrived his cup of tea and his tobacco. Could her magic but reach the length of providing for herself and

her old father, then, indeed, he would be glad of her and proud of her. But no; he never had got her taught a trade. Her mother had been a lady; let the world remember that. His daughter had enough to do about her own fireside. He needed his little comforts looked after. Were she to go running about after millinering and dress-making, what kind of life would her old father have at home? Well, well, she had a handsome face. No brighter eyes were to be seen about Dublin. He had turned the matter over in his mind. Never fear but she would do her work well some day.

Michael Grace lit his pipe and smoked, and Marcella stood waiting at the opposite side of the hearth. Should she dare to light the evening lamp? No; her father might be angry, thinking she wanted him to work.

The weaver extended his large feet to the blaze, and smoked with great zest. He was dreaming that he lay at ease in a snug arm-chair by the side of a fire that was not likely to go out, and that he had no other duty than to smoke all day long, with a pleasant odor of plentiful food in his atmosphere. Old Michael's castle in the air was a substantial one, and he thought he knew the road to it well.

"I'm gettin' old, my girl, an' I feel myself full of aches and pains. Whisht, now, ye needn't look so scared. It's only ould age that's come down on me. I'm not goin' to be makin' many more gran' gownds for the ladies, an' that's all."

Marcella's face grew pale in the firelight. She had hardly thought this day so near at hand.

"You've got cold, father!" she said, briskly. "Cheer up and let me nurse you a while."

"No such a thing!" cried the father, angrily. "I tell you I'm grown old, an' I look to have my rest."

Marcella sat silent. Many items of trouble were cast up in her mind on the moment into a long account—owing to the baker, dinner to-morrow, rent at the end of the week—next week—next month—next year.

"Father," said she, presently, "why did you not give me a trade?"

"A trade! Puff!" The old man drew away his pipe, and made a contemptuous flourish with his hand. "Your mother was a lady, girl. Remember that."

Marcella had heard such an answer before. She had spoken on the subject many times; maybe once too often, for she was silent now.

"Ay," echoed the weaver, "she was a rale lady. No better blood ever danced a Pathrick's dance in the four ould walls of the Castle yonder—black as it is wid the age, and big as it is wid the size. It was a Pathrick's night that I seen her the first.

"My masther had an order on hands of blue tabinet for her Excellencyess the Lady Liftenant. Holiday as it was, I had to stay at the finishing of it. I worked very hard to get the evenin' to myself; but it was far in the night when the parcel was ready. 'Well, well,' I said, 'I'll just take the bundle in my hands, and go up to

the Castle at the wanst wid it; an' maybe Molly Sullivan 'll contrive to get me a sight of the quality at their dancin'.' Molly was a tidy little maid at the Castle, an' there's little she wouldn't ha' done for me at the time.

"It's myself was in the right, for Molly found me a peep-hole. At first I could see an' hear nothing, for the whole place was in wan uproar of splendiour. The music was fit to make your heart burst in two halves wid the delight. Molly said they were dancin', but I only saw the ladies sailin' up an' down the room like swans in a river, an' the gentlemen follyin' them, an' meetin' them, an' bowin' to them.

"I was hardly drawin' my breath wid admiration when my eyes lit on wan little face; an' never could they leave it the rest of the time. She was shy and frightened lookin' someways—Molly said because it was her first Castle ball. She was as beautiful as a fairy, an' as happy as a queen. I thought she had the purtiest pair of eyes that ever were planted in any mortal head. An' she was dressed out all in white, wid a long poplin train; an' what but Michael should set about thinkin' maybe 'twas his hands that wove the very piece! Molly knew all about her: in the regard of her sister bein' the little jewel's maid.

"I went home that night grumblin' to myself because I wasn't a gentleman; that I couldn't wear a uniform, nor ruffles, nor silk stockin's; for then I might ha' been leadin' her about as proud as e'er a wan o' them, an' bowin' to her, an' meetin' her, an' follyin' her through the crowd. But in a few days I forgot about it all. Times took a good turn wid me, an' my head was full o' the lucre o' the world.

"Five or six years went by, an' I had got to be a master-weaver. I had taken this ould house, the best in the street, an' made it look tidy, an' furnished it up handsome. An' it's little I thought who I was doin' it for. An' when it was finished there was somethin' the matter wid me. An' wan day the truth hit me hard; an' I says to myself, 'Michael Grace,' says I, 'you're a lonesome man!' An' then an order came in, an' I forgot about it again. An' that same day I was walkin' down the street, an' who should I light upon but little Molly Sullivan.

"'Well, well, Misther Grace!' said she; 'but it's you has got up in the world since the Pathrick's night when ye came up to the Castle wid the poplin.'

"'It's thrue for you, Molly,' said I, 'an' I hope things goes aiqually as well wid yourself.'

"'I'm not goin' to complain,' said Molly; 'but it's badly the times has gone wid some since then. Do you remember the little lady you fell in love wid at the Pathrick's ball? Well, she's down now, lower nor you nor me.'

"'What do you mane?' said I, for well I minded her.

"'The father went to ruin that year,' said Molly, 'wid his horses, an' his hounds, an' his dinners. Hunted himself to death, an' his poor wife wid him. An' what was the daughter but a child?—an' her friends has dropped off, an' the world has turned against her.

An' she's trying to airn her bread, the poor crature, doin' little bits of sewin' that wouldn't feed a cat. But it's in the graveyard she'll be afore long,' said Molly.

"That's what Molly said, an' it was thrue. Molly was married only middlin' herself. She had a corner to let, an' the poor little lady was livin' wid her. I seen her at the place, by the way I should give an order for work, an' the purty young face was thin an' worn, an' she had no more pride than a babby. For three long years I stood her friend, fast an' firm, till Molly died, rest her sowl! an' there wasn't a crature left to take care of the little lady. I don't know where I got the courage to ask her to marry me. I tould her I wasn't fit to spake to her, I knew; but I could give her a safe home, an' I could worship the ground she walked. An' she took it quite quiet, an' was thankful to me till the last day she lived. An' the ould house was beautiful to go into from ever the first day she set her foot upon the floor, an' ill-luck ne'er came near me till she left it in her coffin. I made her the purtiest gowns that ever seen the loom; but she didn't like the gay ones, I could see: seemed as if they minded her o' somethin'. An' she never wanst gave me the crooked word. It was 'Yes, Michael, if ye plase,' an' 'No, Michael, if ye plase.' She got rosy an' happy-lookin' for wan little while, after the child was born—that was you, Marcella. Then she faded like the snow off the ditch."

Old Michael paused, and drew his hand across his eyes. Marcella had listened to every word. The tale was not new to her, yet it never had grown wearisome. Many a time had her fancy seen that pretty girl-lady, her mother, dancing in glee among her peers at the great Castle ball. Of Patrick nights, when the carriages were rolling to the Castle, she had sat late over her fire and studied the brilliant picture. Very dazzling were the lights, very gloomy the shades, and Marcella's thoughtful eyes had marked them all.

Many a time, too, had she lingered passing the old house before entering it. She had peered in at the windows, and had seen the gentle creature with her baby in her arms. Up and down she had seen her pacing softly, pondering in mild amazement the sadness of the changes in her life. So this mother was like a dream or a story, but with a difference. In passing away she had left something behind her. Her strange little fate had made a mark upon her narrow bit of world: an unusual mark, which would be seen and recognized. She had left a nature with her daughter which was foreign to the class to which that daughter must belong. And this Marcella had observed in her own untutored way.

"So that bein' the story of your mother," said the weaver, "never spake again about learnin' a thrade. I'll settle you like a lady in a house of your own, an' Michael will have a seat in the chimney-corner."

"Father!" cried Marcella, startled out of her dream.

"Buy yourself a ribbon, and begin to look handsome," he went on, "for I've made a fine match for you. And I'll weave you a weddin'-gown that'll stand alone."

Marcella sprung forward and stood trembling before him.

"Oh no, father, I will not have that!" she cried, hastily.

The weaver took his pipe out of his mouth and stared at her. How handsome she looked, even when she was a bit troublesome, like this. It was well she was, or the well-to-do grocer on the quay would never have taken a fancy to her, as she stepped out of the chapel door on Sundays.

"Not have what?" he asked, peevishly. "Maybe ye'd like a thrade to work at betther nor a husband to airn for ye?"

"I would," said Marcella, eagerly.

"Ye're a fool," shouted the weaver, "and ye'll go to the poor-house! It's the cursed proud blood of strangers that's workin' in ye, settin' ye against the biddin' of yer father!"

Michael was angered and disappointed in his daughter. Would any other girl in the world not have been thoroughly charmed with his plan? But there was always a queer turn in her, wherever she came from. Her eyes might be like her mother's now when they had tears in them, but it was not her mother's humble spirit that had looked out of them a minute ago.

He got up impatiently, knocked the ashes out of his pipe, and went off to bed in a sulk, leaving a frightened, aching heart and the unfinished tabinet behind him.

Marcella lit the poor but neatly trimmed lamp, and unfolded a new piece of sewing. It was still early in the night, and she could, perhaps, earn sixpence before the great bell of St. Patrick's Cathedral should boom forth, calling the hour of midnight over the city. And meantime she could give herself up to her own sad and speculating thoughts, undisturbed except by the occasional too-familiar sounds of quarrelling in the streets, as men and women, turned out of the late-closing taverns in the neighborhood, passed under the window, on their way to wretched homes.

Shuddering over the announcement her father had just made, of his desire to marry her to some well-to-do man of his own, or not much better than his own, class, she assured herself again and again that this was a matter in which she had a right to refuse obedience to him. Though she was certainly his child, and would always devote herself lovingly to his service, yet she had, as he had angrily complained, blood in her veins which was different from his. The instincts of her mother, of whose ladyhood he so proudly boasted, were with her, and she felt that they would cling to her as long as she lived. She acknowledged to herself now, what through loyalty to him she had often tried to deny and ignore, that there was a gulf between herself and his friends and associates which time would never help her to bridge. It was not that she disliked or despised the poor people around her, but they were not of her class, and she was not of theirs. She could help them, sympathize with them, pity them, respect them as occasion required, but she could not take a husband of their kind.

Dropping her work and covering her face with her hands, she gave way to her grief and wept. Having faced the loneliness, the

isolation of her position in the world, she perceived the misfortune that her birthright of refinement must be to her, the burden of solitude that it laid upon her. Must she spend her whole life sewing alone in a garret, as now, after her father had left her, when she should indeed be alone in the world? He must really be ill, must feel himself breaking down, or he never would have talked as he had talked this evening. Oh, why had he not given her a trade, not taught her something by which she could earn for him now, by which she should be able to maintain herself after he was gone?

She thought of the very small amount of education she had received: not sufficient to enable her to be a National School teacher without further study. She could read and write well, better than most ladies (though of that she knew nothing), and had read and reread the few treasured books which her mother had left behind her, and which the weaver had always preserved with a sort of superstitious reverence. "The Imitation of Christ," Wordsworth's poems, and a New Testament were the staple of Marcella's library.

Though her fingers were naturally clever at putting feminine odds and ends together, she had received no teaching to enable her to be a dress-maker or milliner. And who was to support her while she learned such handicrafts, even if she were free to begin now? She knew nothing of artistic work, such as ladies do, and which she had often looked at admiringly in the windows of shops where such things are to be sold.

Her thoughts strayed longingly towards the convent where she had received her scanty education at a daily school, to the hospital where the bright-faced Sisters of Charity pass their days in tending the sick and the dying. Oh, could she be even a lay-sister under such a blessed roof! But how could she hope to be good enough, clever enough, strong enough? Now, at all events, she could not desert her father. She must endure his anger, she must stitch night and day—

A subdued but persistent sound of urgent knocking here interrupted the course of her thoughts. She dropped her work and listened. It was at the street door. Some one was wanting admittance to the house. As she sat listening, in absolute wonder, the summons was repeated, softly, rapidly, imploringly.

CHAPTER II.

NOTHING WRONG.

MARCELLA got up from her seat and went down into the mildewed old hall, and spoke through the key-hole.

"Who wants to get in so late at night? I cannot open."

"Open for God's sake!" said a voice. "'Tis a matter of life and death."

More information as to character is sometimes conveyed in the

tones of a voice than in the expression of an eye, and Marcella, believing instinctively in the owner of the voice, opened the door without further hesitation. In an instant it was shut again by a pair of strong hands, and a man was standing in the darkness in the hall beside her.

By the very faint ray of lamplight that came through the dusty and broken fanlight, she could just see that he was tall and dark, pale and weary looking.

"You have done a good act," he said; "I am more thankful than I can say. Will you go further, and find me a hiding-place for a few hours? I trust myself entirely into your hands. But first of all, let me assure you before God that I have done nothing wrong."

"It is a serious thing," said Marcella, hurriedly, for the urgency of his manner pressed her. "I am a young girl, and my father is an old man, and there are only two of us in the house. We are very poor, and I think if you were not good we should hardly be worth your notice. And if you are good and in trouble—"

"I do not boast of much goodness, but I am not a wicked man, and I am in a strait. Is there any place in the house where you could conceal me? I have reason to fear I have been watched and may be searched for here."

"There is a place," said Marcella, "though not a comfortable one. Come up-stairs and I will show it to you."

She led the way up the worm-eaten stair. Old Michael Grace slept heavily, and the light sound of their feet did not wake him. Marcella knew that the times were troubled, and that it was a moment when a man might be in a strait through his political opinions. She therefore asked no more questions, and hoped for the best. At all events, once fastened up in the old secret closet behind the panel in the unused room, at some distance from that in which she and her father lived, the stranger would be safe, and also incapable of delivering himself till she should choose to release him with her own hands. Even if he were a robber—"

She fetched her small lamp, and holding it over her head rejoined the stranger on the threshold of the mouldy and deserted room, into which she had introduced him.

A robber! What a fool she must be to have allowed such an idea to cross her mind for an instant, was her thought as she glanced at the face on which the meagre lamplight fell. It was the thoughtful face of a cultivated gentleman, a countenance of no ordinary cast, pale and worn, with a look of noble resolve and manly determination on the brow and mouth.

"Such a man could do, could think, no wrong," thought Marcella, with enthusiasm, while the piercing gray eyes of the stranger scanned her own face and form, wondering much, even in the midst of his own anxiety, that so beautiful and intelligent a creature should be found harboring in this rotten old shelter in the midst of the poverty and squalor of the city slums.

"The closet is here, sir," she said, putting her hand on the wood

that still lined the strong-built walls. "It was evidently made for a hiding-place in the old times, and I think nobody remembers its existence but me."

For a moment her words and unconsciously graceful action as she looked over her shoulder at him suggested the conceit that this was no woman who had come to his aid, but the ghost of some long dead lady of quality, who had once dwelt in state in the now dilapidated mansion, and who had come back to reveal to him the secret of her house, pleased that there had occurred yet another opportunity for the service of the once much needed hiding-place.

Marcella threw open a door, formed by the panel, which creaked on its rusty hinges, and disclosed a small chamber, long enough for a man to lie his full length in, and high enough to allow of his standing upright. It smelled of decay and damp, and was as dark as a dungeon.

"It is ventilated through the outer wall," she said, "so you cannot be smothered. At what time shall I come back to let you out?"

"About an hour before daylight, if you will be so good." He was going to say something more, when a loud knocking began to resound upon the street door which had so lately admitted him.

Marcella instantly closed the closet and extinguished her light, which, as the room was a back one, could not have been yet seen by the new applicants for admittance to the house. Then she crept away to the little room where she slept, got into bed, and lay still. This time she was determined she would not open the door to strangers.

The knocking went on for five or ten minutes, and at last became so loud and imperious that Michael Grace was awakened by it.

The old man sat up in his bed and listened in astonishment. It did not seem to him that the house was on fire, and what other reason could there be for such an assault upon his house after midnight? Grumbling, and muttering a few characteristic oaths, he groped out of his room and went stumbling down the staircase, and confronted the assailant of his knocker (a knocker which was one of the few relics of grandeur the old fellow had got to be proud of) with a face of thunder.

At the sight of the police his countenance altered, not for the better, however, and a storm of abuse greeted the stalwart servants of the law.

"You overgrown fools," he said, "what brought you to an honest man's dure at such an hour of the night—or mornin'?—bad luck to me if I know which of them it is!"

"Aisy, Misther Grace, aisy!" said the head-policeman. "It's not you we have to do with. But you see there's been a bad job done to-night—"

"Of course there has!" sneered Grace. "Many's the bad job is done ivery night that you've got no eyes to see, Misther *Omadhaun*. Why didn't you take whoever was afther doin' the job that ye're talkin' of, an' not come routin' a dacent man out of his bed to tell him the news that he could wait for till mornin'?"

"Come, come," said the policeman; "I tell you I am going to search your house. We have reason to suspect that a person concerned in the affair is in hiding here."

"Dropped down the chimney, I suppose, or into the letter-box," said Grace, talking in a sarcastic tone, and glancing towards the slit in the massive door (another source of his pride), where a letter-box once had been. "Nothing more likely to happen in the world, Misther Peeler, when a dacent man is asleep—"

Here the policeman put the master of the house aside, and walked noisily up the crazy stair, followed by a volley of imprecations of a ludicrous and harmless character from the exasperated Grace.

"I'll have ye up before the Lord Liftenant himself, so I will. Where's yer warrant? The law's agin you—"

"Whisht, man," said the second policeman, good-humoredly. "Do you think ye are in England? Don't ye know you're livin' under the Coercion Act?"

"Bedad, so I am," said Grace, "an' I forgot it entirely. Well, now, Misther Policeman, are you satisfied that nobody is here? Nicely you've let Misther—what's his name?—Captain Moonlight—I beg his pardon—slip through your fingers!"

"There's a room here that we have not opened."

"My daughter's room. Then do you want me to brain you?"

But at the same moment Marcella appeared at her door.

"Let them come in, father. You know it is the law."

"Beg pardon, miss, but we have to do our duty."

In a few seconds the big men of the massive belts and helmets were out on the landing again, admitting to each other that they had got on a wrong scent. The house had been easy enough to search. Except in the corner of it occupied by the weaver and his daughter, there was no furniture behind which a man could hide. A look into the empty rooms, with their decaying ceilings and floors, was sufficient; and even the inhabited chambers could not have long concealed a cat. With another apology to Marcella, the policemen soon turned on their heels and retreated from the place, followed by the gibes and jeers of the master of the dilapidated dwelling.

Marcella stood for a moment irresolute on the threshold of her room, as her father came grumbling up the stair again after fastening the door. Ought she to tell him what she had done, relieve her mind of the responsibility she had incurred, and place the fate of the concealed stranger in his hands? She felt that she could not do it. There was no knowing what view a man so uncertain of humor, though with so good a heart, as her father, might take of the affair. If he chose to make up his mind instantly that the refugee was a criminal skulking from justice, he might deliver him up and undo the good she had done, for she felt assured that it was good. On the other hand, a knowledge of what had occurred this night might at some future time involve the old man in difficulty and danger. He had acted in all sincerity in dismissing the police. She alone was accountable for misleading them, and so she elected to remain. Let her take the sole responsibility of her impulsive action.

Grace returned to his bed, and the girl crept back to hers, to lie awake, counting the hours by the strokes of St. Patrick's bell, waiting for the moment for her prisoner's release, and thinking anxiously over this strange event that had broken upon the poverty-stricken monotony of her existence.

Her imagination was possessed by a troubled wonder as to the "bad job" that had been done. How had that man with the noble face got himself mixed up in such an affair? Though she did not read the papers, Marcella heard enough of what they contained from her father, who was a lively politician (as what Irishman is not?), to be well aware that she was living in troubled times, that a struggle was going on between class and class which she could not understand, and that wicked deeds had been done.

In her secret heart Marcella was on the side of the powers that be. The spirit of her lady-mother's forefathers was at this moment more strong within her than sympathy with the "people," who were to her represented chiefly by the drinking, idle, and disorderly crowd who made the slums around her hideous on a Saturday night.

Her heart yearned towards the beings of nice living, refined habits, and finer perceptions, whom she vaguely knew as the upper classes, and of whose kind she felt herself to be. More wise, more intelligent, better educated than the others, why should they not be more fitted to regulate the affairs of the world? She trusted them, blindly following the instinct that was in her blood. She reflected now that if an outrage had been committed in the streets, the gentleman in her keeping was little likely to have been concerned in it.

Had the man been of a coarser mould, had he failed, when seen, to match with the vibrations of his voice which had gained admittance by appealing to her charity, she should, she told herself, have awakened her father directly and placed the affair in his hands. But the secret of a person like this she could venture to keep to herself. Something which she could not have described in the stranger's face, an expression not easily analyzed even by persons accustomed to ticket and label their thoughts, had impressed the untutored girl so vividly that the countenance must henceforth remain on her memory as the incarnation of all that was strong, chivalrous, and stainless in manhood.

Quick and keen in her perceptions, she recognized this fact as she lay thinking, and was glad that she had seen the face. During the rest of that life of hers which was to be spent sewing in a garret, among coarse surroundings, she could hold it in her memory, much as she cherished the picture of her patron saint upon the wall.

At last hearing the hour beginning to toll at which she was to give back his liberty to the intruder, she arose, dressed quickly, and not daring to strike a light, made her way by the glimmer of the faint moonlight into the mouldy recesses of the panelled chamber. The closet was quickly opened, and the stranger stepped out of it.

"I heard the police making search," he said, "and I know how prudent you have been for my sake. How is it possible for me to thank you?"

"I want no thanks," said the girl. "The poor are accustomed to do any little good turn they can. It was fortunate for you that you happened to knock at this door, though, for in no other house would there have been a closet like that."

"Yes, it was providential; I do not overlook that part of it. But any other girl would have raised an alarm. I am deeply grateful for your caution, and your trust in me, both of which have been of the utmost service to me."

"You may wonder, perhaps, that I did not tell my father," said Marcella; and even in the moonlight he could see the vivid color that dyed her face as the idea occurred to her that possibly he thought her less maidenly, even if more self-reliant than others would have been under the circumstances; "and if you had been any other man, I would have done so."

Any other man! Was it possible this girl of the Liberties, whom he had never seen before, could recognize him?

"I do not mean that I know who you are," she said, apprehending his thought, and quick to correct the impression her words had made, "but only that I know that you are good by your face. It was not that I wanted to be bold, but I thought I could venture to take care of you myself, and that it would be sure to be the safest course for you."

"I understand you perfectly," said the stranger, trying to conceal the admiration aroused in him by the straight, proud glance of her beautiful eyes, the graceful gesture with which she threw out her hand, giving her words a kind of impassioned emphasis. He would not distress her maidenly pride by words or looks of masculine compliment. "You are a woman of fine instincts as well as perfect courage," he went on, wondering at himself for speaking to this humble girl in the same language he would have used to an equal. But in manner as well as appearance, he reflected, she was far beyond her class.

Even in his own hour of difficulty, which was not over yet, he could not help feeling curious to know something more of this strange girl, with her peculiar beauty, her mournful, steadfast eyes and thrilling voice. How was her presence to be accounted for in this abode of poverty, in this neighborhood of wretchedness and vice? "Truly the Irish are a wonderful race," he thought, "when such creatures can spring up in the very cellars of our cities." He glanced around to impress the scene upon his memory with a strong conviction that he would in the future look back upon it with exceeding interest—the decaying old room with its mouldy ceiling, rotting panels, and mysterious and friendly closet, and the dark head and pale brows of the girl dimly seen in the scanty moonlight, as she waited patiently till it was his pleasure to follow her from the chamber, to allow her to finish the task she had undertaken for him by letting him noiselessly out of the house and closing the door as silently behind him.

"At all events, I shall never forget this kindness," he said; "and now, if you will allow me to offer you something—"

Emboldened by the certainty that one so wretchedly dressed and living in such a house must be miserably poor, he attempted to put money in her hand. But the girl shrunk from the touch of it, and quickly drew several steps farther away from him. Poor as she was, and miserable as were her prospects, she would not take money for this charity she had done. The man whom she had sheltered and succored, unknown as he was, had already become her hero, her *protegé*, in some sort her child, by virtue of her efforts for him. She would not have her part in him blotted out like a settled score.

"I cannot," she said, eagerly; "I cannot! The poor are accustomed to serve others without payment. I am glad to have been of any little use to you. Do not spoil it all by paying for what cannot be bought."

"You are a strange, unusual girl," he said. "Well, I cannot distress my benefactress. You will not refuse, however—I trust you will not refuse—to take some little token of my gratitude. This ring is not very valuable," he added, drawing one from his finger. "I have nothing else to offer you at this moment. *You* will spoil all if you deny me the pleasure of remembering afterwards that you accepted it."

She leaned forward and looked with interest at the ring. Yes, she would take this shining circlet as a memorial of this night, which had given a living form and voice to the ideal of her dreams.

She held forth her hand for it with sudden eagerness, and he dropped it in her palm.

"May I put it on your finger?"

She hesitated, and then held up her hand, while he placed the ring on a finger too slender to hold it in safety long.

The next moment they had passed the threshold of the rotting old chamber, and were descending the staircase in the dark, slowly and carefully for fear of awaking the weaver.

As her hand was on the lock of the door, he said to her, earnestly, "It is possible that I may never see you again in this world, but if so, remember, whatever may come to pass, that I repeat I have not been in hiding here because of any criminal thing that I have done."

"If I had not been sure of it, I should not have acted as I did," said Marcella, firmly; and then the door opened and closed, and the stranger was gone.

Marcella listened anxiously in the hall for a few moments. It was a safe hour, she hoped, for his return to his home, wherever that home might be; an hour when the late people have all gone to rest at last and the early people have not got up. With a vehement prayer for his safety she went softly back to her own room, and lit her lamp and examined her ring, the only proof remaining to her that this wonderful adventure was not entirely a dream. It was a very old, slender hoop set with a few pearls; not extremely valuable, as the donor had said, but priceless in the eyes of its new owner. She threaded it on a string and hung it round her neck: there let it remain forever, as an earnest of the happy service she had done.

Then she took out her sewing and worked for an hour and thought again and again over every look and every accent of the stranger. No fear that she had done wrong in admitting him troubled her. As she had said to him, the poor are accustomed to do service to each other, and, she might have added, they do not always stop to think of the cost. To her mind it was the most simple and rational thing in the world to harbor a fellow-creature who was in trouble. The secrecy from her father had been justified by the exigencies of the case. The stranger had thought so, and had thanked her for it.

"I am deeply grateful for your caution and your trust in me," he had said, "and both have been of the utmost service to me."

Again and again she wondered what was the danger from which she had saved him. What was it that he could not openly face with that brave and piercing glance?

Six o'clock rang, and the people began to stir in the streets, and Marcella quenched her light, and put on her shabby old cloak and went out to mass, picking her way through the gutters and seeing the day break over the squalor of the streets. This early hour of the morning, when she could walk alone through a sort of rarefied atmosphere not of this earth, with her eyes on the red dawnlight that just touched the chimneys at a street corner as she passed, or on the silvery clouds that floated behind the ugly roofs above her, was the only happy one she knew in the twenty-four. It led her to the church where she was accustomed to carry all her sorrows and temptations, leaving them at the foot of the altar, and taking away in their place something that enabled her to get through her day, if not with the gladness of a saint, at least with a certain meek resignation.

Here, in the dim shades of one of the poorest churches of the people, she found the lamp of faith ever burning, and the promises of the Lord written all over the walls around her. Why should she despair whom He had saved? Blessed are the meek, for they shall possess the land. Blessed are they that mourn, for they shall be comforted. She mourned, and she should be comforted. She would try to be meek that she might arrive at her heavenly inheritance. If life must be a bleak journey, she would endeavor to travel it bravely, following all along the Way of the Cross on her knees—as now.

As she moved from one dark corner of the church to another, faring along that dolorous way, just able to see in the faint dawn the figure in the great tragic drama, her eyes discerning eagerly one form holding ever on its painful road and beckoning her to come on, her heart grew wonderfully lighter, and she felt a strong conviction that her future would not be made harder for her than she could bear.

The church was crowded at that early hour with a multitude of patient toilers and sufferers, delicate and ill-fed girls on their way to a too-long day's work, the hopeless repetition of which was gradually killing them; careworn mothers of families, with piteous faces, praying passionately for help for the souls and bodies they had in charge; withered and half-starved old men and women who had crept

from the wretched dens where they hid, from the poor-house to the feet of Christ in the dim dawn, unwilling to show their faces in the fuller daylight. To these Marcella's heart turned from the happier and healthier faces which helped to fill the church. The strong men and women who had come to get a blessing on the tolerably prosperous work of their day had not the same interest for her as had the wretched. Across her prayer for all who were in trouble or danger came suddenly the sound of the voice of the stranger she had succored, and the anxious though fearless expression of his eyes, and finishing her prayer with a hearty supplication for his welfare she reluctantly quitted the church and went home.

As she retraced her steps through mud and dirt, now painfully visible, the rainbows of the dawn had vanished from above the roofs, and the leaden sky of wintry day looked sullenly down on the city's slums.

Well, what matter did it make, so long as the lights on the everlasting hills could be discerned beyond the roofs of this world by the eyes of faith. As she entered the gloomy door of her home Marcella felt buoyed up with hope that she should in some future day which she could not now see live a fuller, nobler, and more useful life than she had known as yet, and that her patience in the present moment might go far to prepare her for that day.

With a brighter face than usual she prepared her father's breakfast. Presently he came in with a newspaper in his hand.

"Look here!" he cried. "The police were not wrong about that bad job they were talkin' about. There was a murder done in the city last night, not half a dozen streets away from us."

"Murder!" echoed Marcella, turning whiter than the milk she was pouring into his tea.

"There now, girl, ye needn't look so frightened. Nobody can say we harbored or hid the assassins, as they wanted to even to us. Make haste and give me my breakfast while I read the particulars. And mind, I'll want you to take some tabinet to Merrion Square this mornin'."

CHAPTER III.

AT HOME IN MERRION SQUARE.

MRS. TIMOTHY O'FLAHERTY O'KELLY was sitting in her own particular snuggery in her handsome house in Merrion Square, and opposite to her on the hearth sat Father Daly, of Ballydownvalley, Distresna, Back-o'-the-mountains, in Connaught. All of the above three names had to be put on an envelope expected to find its way into the good priest's hand when he was at home. Back-o'-the-mountains was the post-town, the name of which had been Englified for convenience' sake. Ballydownvalley was the parish administered by Father Daly, and Distresna was the town-land on which his thatched cabin and cabbage-garden stood.

"No, Father Daly," the lady was saying, "with all due respect to you and your views, I must assure you I have made up my mind that I will never be induced to return to Crane's Castle. Since the people have become so ungrateful as to refuse to be satisfied to live under the rule of an O'Kelly without grumbling, I will no longer sacrifice my own little pleasures in life to spend my time among them, and to show them my countenance. They object to their rents—the rents that their forefathers paid without complaint—"

"Or promised to pay and could not," put in the priest.

"True, the rents were often remitted, for which grace they did not scorn to be deeply and everlastingly grateful. The present race will never be thankful for anything."

"Try them," said Father Daly, dryly.

"Try them? Really, Father Daly, I am astonished at you. Have I not built them a school-house, put them up new houses, in which they refused to live—"

"Not being able to meet the demand for increased rent which the mere possession of better dwellings did not enable them to pay," said Father Daly, quietly.

"Did I not give the women flannel petticoats and shawls when they were so miserably clad that I was ashamed of them as my tenantry?" persisted the old lady, with an angry flash of the eyes.

"And paid for them out of the surplus rent which was in your pocket and ought to have been in theirs," returned the priest, with mild bluntness.

Mrs. O'Kelly breathed hard, and sat still for a few moments, trying bravely to restrain her wrath, for she was a good Catholic and a kind-hearted woman according to her lights, and to quarrel with old Father Daly, who had been parish priest of Ballydownvalley for thirty years, whom she knew to be honest, unselfish, and devoted to his duty, besides being her sincere friend, with all his plain-speaking, would have been to her a catastrophe much to be deplored. She looked upon him as one so blinded by the heavenly lights of his vocation as to be an impossible guide to a sensible woman of the world like herself; and though, from a religious point of view, she held that there could be no more worthy soul alive than the priest, yet from her vantage ground as practical woman and landlord, her own common-sense, as she called it, appeared to her a far more respectable thing than the weak enthusiasm of any one whose only concern in the universe was avowedly with charity and prayer.

"No, I will not be angry with you, Father Daly," she said, "though I find it very hard to keep my temper. The O'Kellys were always friends with their priests, no matter—"

"How misguided the priests might be in venturing to give them a warning," said Father Daly, slyly, with a twinkle in his eye.

"Exactly. Priests are mortals, after all, you know, old friend, and they are liable to make mistakes like the rest of us sinners."

"Too true."

"And so, you must allow me to remain where I am, and do my

duty in my own way. I have been driven out of the country where my ancestors, who spent their money freely there—"

"Hunting, drinking, roistering, keeping open house for their equals in station and in folly," said Father Daly, "not in any way that was of use to the poor. If you were one of these, my dear lady, I would not be asking you to return to Distresna. Better for the people to be deserted by their natural protectors than to be subject to the bad example of such as the O'Kellys of by-gone days."

"I agree with you there, though the people need not have been deserted if they would have learned to be content. But their grumbles and their menaces I will not endure. And I wonder greatly, Father Daly, that you would choose such a time to come here and make such a proposal to me. The murder that occurred last night, of a landlord whose property lies not fifty miles from mine, ought to be a sufficient answer, and a very terrible one, to all your suggestions as to my conduct. *There* was a man who, I doubt not, did his duty."

Father Daly sighed heavily.

"I cannot enter into that question," he said. "All I can say is, if you were to follow my advice you would run no risk. I pray God," he went on, with deep emotion in his face and voice, "that whatever may happen, none of my flock may ever be stained by ever so small a participation in the crime of Cain. If I sympathize with their cares and miseries, and strive with them to obtain redress, it is only on the express condition that they obey my teachings on higher matters, and keep themselves sinless before Heaven."

"I am sure you do your best," said Mrs. O'Kelly, in an unconsciously patronizing tone. "But I am not going to take the odds as to whether the secret Fenians of your parish may receive orders to finish me or not. I have other duties in life besides trying to humor an unreasonable tenantry. I go to daily mass, even when the weather is cold and my rheumatism troublesome. I have many charities on my hands here. I do my share in upholding the respectability of the Irish gentry in Dublin. I pay my respects periodically to the viceroy of my queen. Neither do I forget to patronize the home manufactures of my country; only this day I expect a parcel of rich tabinet, woven in Dublin, to make me a castle train. My *modiste* wished me to have it of Lyons velvet, but I said 'No, not unless it can be made for me in Ireland.' But, oh, Father Daly, there is something else I want to say to you. What am I to do about these dreadful O'Flahertys?"

"Who are they, ma'am?" said the priest, his mind still running on his miserable parishioners.

"Why, don't you know? The people who expect to be my heirs; hardly kindred, so very distantly related, and have always been as disagreeable to me as they could be. I simply can't bear them, Father Daly, and yet I have no nearer of kin. *Am* I obliged to leave them my property, or can I bequeath it all to the Church or the poor?"

Father Daly reflected a few moments, while an expression something like bitterness flitted over his benevolent countenance. He

knew the O'Flahertys to be rack-renting, overbearing people, whose tenants were in even a more wretched plight than the people of Distresna. It seemed, then, that his flock were doomed to fall from bad to worse. As for the alternative so wildly proposed by the lady as a last means of defeating the impertinent hopes of the objects of her dislike—that is, the idea of her leaving her property *to the poor*—well it suggested to the priest one of those fine ironical touches which life is always putting to our plans and projects. On the one hand, a half-starved population drained of a rent a fair deduction from which would help to feed them, and on the other a fortune setting out to look for the poor!

"I cannot undertake to advise you about that," he said. "Are you sure you have no nearer kindred in the world than the O'Flahertys?"

"I am afraid—I am quite sure. For a long time I had some hope that a younger branch of our family might turn up. There was one who sunk in the world and was forgotten. He might have left heirs, but I hardly hope now to discover them, if they exist. At one time I even thought of adopting somebody. There is Bryan Kilmorey, a fine fellow and always a pet of mine till lately. Since he has shown such very erratic tendencies, quite mixed himself up with Nationalists in politics, I, of course, have changed my views. And seeing that he has disappointed me, I shall look for no one else. Now, stay, you are not going away, Father Daly. Would it really be right to leave all I have to the poor?"

Father Daly had taken his hat, and only for this question would have gone out of the room with his present thoughts unspoken. But Mrs. O'Kelly's eagerly repeated query about the poor was the last straw that broke the back of his patience.

"When you are about making that will," he said, "consult some one who knows less of your hardness to those poor whom God placed in your power in this life than I do. Better, I tell you, to do good while you live than try to snatch back at it with your dead hand. Better be just with your worldly goods from a pure intention, than assume generosity in your last hour for the purpose of gratifying your dislike to your neighbor."

He raised his hand in warning, and the old lady got up from her chair and confronted him with angry eyes and a convulsive movement of the head.

"That will do, Father Daly," she said, with a hysterical quaver in her voice. "I will trouble you no further at present. Do not let me detain you any longer, and please don't return here till I send for you."

"I will not, ma'am. Trust me, I will not," said the priest, faintly, and turned away to the door, feeling with a pang that he had lost an old friend and injured the cause of his people as well. He fumbled for his stick in the hall, and took an umbrella instead, then had to turn back and rectify his mistake.

"Now, what does be ailin' Father Daly to-day anyway?" said the butler to himself, as he stood on the threshold of the big hall door

and watched the old man trudging down the square, absently holding his stick upright like an umbrella, for it was raining. "I suppose the mistress is after rakin' him about thim rents down at Disthresna. Throth an' she might lave Father Daly alone. But sure, though she's the good misthress to live with, still she does be the divil when she takes a thing in her head."

It was Mrs. O'Flaherty O'Kelly's day at home, and visitors were already waiting for her in the drawing-room, whither she repaired as soon as she could remove the traces of excitement from her countenance. As she sailed in with her rich black silk dress trailing behind her, her black lace shawl floating from her shoulders, and her white lace cap crowning her whiter locks, she looked as stately an old lady as could be found in the three kingdoms.

"*Dear* Mrs. O'Kelly, how very well you're looking!" cried a voice with a Galwegian brogue, and a tall florid young woman came with a bouncing movement across the floor to meet her.

"Thank you, Miss O'Flaherty; I don't know that a flush arising from vexation makes one look particularly well, especially when it gets into the nose. Now, my flush always get into my nose, and so I would rather you didn't notice it."

"Dear Mrs. O'Kelly, you are always so original. And no wonder you are vexed. Everybody is so wretched about this dreadful murder. Nobody knows whose turn will come next. And to think of them following him to Dublin! It is very comforting at any rate to those who take the risk of staying on the spot all the year round, as poor papa does at Mount Ramshackle. People who run away don't fare any better, it seems."

"Humph!" said Mrs. O'Kelly, twitching the end of her lace shawl with nervous fingers. She was well aware of Mr. O'Flaherty's reasons for living permanently at Mount Ramshackle. He had so freely squandered his once handsome fortune that he found himself unable to live anywhere else, and besides, it was an open secret that he was a little too fond of the "mountain dew" of his native wilds, and, being so, preferred to blush unseen in his privacy rather than show his rubicund countenance on the highways of the world. So, when Miss O'Flaherty boasted that her papa had never deserted his post at home, while other people lived as absentees wherever they pleased, Mrs. O'Kelly always said "Humph!"

"But I am sure I do not wonder," Miss O'Flaherty went on, sipping her tea, "at any one running away from such ungrateful savages. If I did not escape sometimes myself I should die of disgust."

Now, Mrs. O'Kelly knew well that whatever right she had to the gratitude of the tenantry, the O'Flaherty's had none. They had built no houses and bestowed no petticoats. The tradition of their family, still admirably cherished, had always been to spend twopence for every penny they could wring out of the wretched tillers of the rocky and boggy wilderness which was crowned by the glory of Mount Ramshackle—owing the balance to any one who would credit them. Miss O'Flaherty looked on the poor of her father's

estate much as she regarded the lean horses that dragged her up and down the hilly roads, and the sheep that were killed to furnish the leg of mutton for the family table. They were there for her support and convenience, and any sign of unwillingness on their part was to be infinitely derided. Mrs. O'Kelly knew that in very truth there was much more sympathy between her own views of the people and those of Father Daly than between her own views and those of Miss O'Flaherty. And therefore, though to many and various ears the lady of Distresna would formally abuse her tenants and complain of their treatment of her, yet never would she be betrayed into such weakness in presence of an O'Flaherty. Between them and herself she drew such a broad line that by no chance or artifice could she be brought to mingle her grievances with theirs. And it must be said, in justice to her, that her objection to think of the O'Flahertys as her heirs was not entirely caused by personal dislike of them. In spite of her present anger at the peasantry of Distresna, she felt a genuine distaste to the idea of their falling into O'Flaherty hands. And this distaste was strengthened when it happened, as it sometimes would, that after listening to Miss O'Flaherty's views, as now, she heard her in conversation with some one else alluding to the estate of Distresna as if it were already in the possession of her family.

Miss O'Flaherty was not in the dark as to this peculiarity of the old lady, but thought herself quite safe in teasing her. She had no nearer of kin to whom to leave her lands. But when Mrs. O'Kelly refused to reply to her remarks, as now, and began to twitch the corner of her shawl, Miss O'Flaherty thought it prudent to change the conversation.

"I'm just after meeting Bryan Kilmorey in Nassau Street," said Miss O'Flaherty, who was not above sprinkling her conversation with Hibernicisms, "and I asked him what he thought of this murder, and how he intended to go on defending the people and talking about their virtues."

"And pray, what did he answer you?" asked Mrs. O'Kelly, erecting her head as if to declare that here was another of her pet hobbies going to be taken from under her and ridden to death before her eyes, and that she would not have it, would seize it by the reins and bring it to a dead stop rather than trust it to another.

"I should think Mr. Bryan Kilmorey would have a keener appreciation of the iniquity of murder than you could have, in proportion to the superior size of his heart and brains."

Miss O'Flaherty tittered. "Dear Mrs. O'Kelly, you do use such eloquent language. *Do* you think men's hearts and brains are really larger than ours, now? I am nearly as tall as he is, you know. I confess he remarked that he had *no* sympathy with murderers; but rather spoiled the statement, however, by saying that his opinion of the virtues of the people remained the same."

"A rash fool is sometimes more admirable than a prudent rogue," said Mrs. O'Kelly, oracularly.

"Well, I wouldn't quite call him a fool," said Miss O'Flaherty.

"I should think not," retorted the old lady; and she was just sharpening her tongue to say something which would make it clear to her visitor that she did not forget the court that had at one time been paid, and in vain, to her favorite-in-disgrace by the ladies of Mount Ramshackle, when more visitors poured in, and the conversation became general, fluctuating as to subject between the terrible murder in the city streets last night and the approaching drawing-room at the Castle.

"So lucky it was not an official!" said a sprightly girl who was looking forward to the season of amusement which is so short in Dublin. "How dreadful if anything had stopped the Castle balls!"

"Now, Katty," said her sister, "don't pretend to be so heartless."

"Well, I did not even know him, and I hear he was an ogre," said Miss Katty, pouting. "I wouldn't kill even an ogre myself. But I never did him any harm, and I don't see why he should interfere with my dancing."

"He will not," said another lady. "What are you going to wear at the drawing-room?"

"Now, ladies," said Mrs. O'Kelly, "I am going to petition you in favor of tabinet. I have been directed to a first-rate weaver, who will give you a splendid quality cheaper than the shops. I have ordered a train myself, and I am expecting the material home this afternoon. If it comes in time, I will show it to you."

"The colors are so ugly," said a graceful woman, the wife of a leading queen's counsel who was on the eve of being made solicitor-general, a lady who had accepted all the recent improvements in color as to dress and furnishing. "Poplin will never revive until the new delicate shades are introduced."

"I forgot your æsthetic tendencies," said Mrs. O'Kelly with a compassionate smile. "Indeed I must say, for my part, I hope the weavers will keep to their genuine greens, blues, and ambers, and leave us *something* with a bit of color in it. I confess I am not of the die-away school, Mrs. O'Shaughnessy."

Mrs. O'Shaughnessy slightly shrugged her graceful shoulders, and glanced round the fiercely ugly room which boldly claimed for its mistress a place in the first rank of the Philistines. The builder had long ago made the room handsome, with ceiling exquisitely carved in wreaths and figures, and with noble old chimney-pieces of inlaid and sculptured marble. But the gilded consol-tables, the carpet of brilliant varieties, the crude colors swearing at one another from ottoman to couch, and from easy-chair to lounge, so distracted the eye that the only beautiful things of the interior passed unnoticed.

"But, Mrs. O'Kelly," said another young woman, the daughter of a prominent Castle official, who had of late bravely improved her apartments at home, "I assure you the new colors are admitted to be the best. Why, even in the wilds of Donegal the peasants are knitting them into stockings and jerseys for sale. New dyes have been sent over from England."

"It may be, it may be," said Mrs. O'Kelly. "I do not worship everything English as you do, my dear Miss Nugent. I hold that

just as many mistakes are made in England as in Ireland, which God knows is saying enough."

And then, feeling that her temper, which had never recovered Father Daly's home-thrust, was getting the better of her again, the old lady got up and rang the bell.

"See if that parcel of tabinet has come home yet, Murphy," she said, "and if so, bring it to me."

"There's a young woman down below with it, ma'am," said Murphy, briskly.

"Bring me the parcel, then, and tell the young woman to wait," said Mrs. O'Kelly.

The poplin but a few hours ago taken from Grace's loom was carried to the drawing-room, opened out, looped about the chairs, hung over the back of a couch, displayed in every light for the admiration of the assembled ladies.

"You see, this is only a sober purple," said Mrs. O'Kelly, "as I would not, of course, go out in anything gay. And for even duller people than me there is a lovely gray, and they have a very good brown also, and a handsome myrtle green. But I confess, if I were young, it would be the emerald green, and the turquoise blue, and the carnation pink, that I would be thinking of."

After the tabinet had been admired, criticised, and pulled about for half an hour, and two fresh teapots had been emptied, fortunately not over it, but only over the debate upon it, the visitors disappeared at last, and left Mrs. O'Flaherty O'Kelly rather tired after her "day."

"Roll it up again, Murphy," she said, wearily, looking at the poplin, "and put it in the paper, and then poke the fire. And stay, I will go down myself and speak to that young woman. Where is she, Murphy?"

"I put her in the library, ma'am," said Murphy.

Mrs. O'Kelly drew her shawl around her and moved slowly down the stairs, sighing as she went. What with her feud with her people, Father Daly's denunciation of her right-minded conduct, Miss O'Flaherty's general unpleasantness and particular fling at Bryan Kilmorey, and finally, the newfangled ways of fashionable women who would not wear sensibly-dyed poplin for the good of their country, her heart felt very sore. What a world of contradictions and misunderstanding this was! It were good to flee away from it and be at rest!

The library door was not quite shut, and she did not make sufficient noise in opening it further to disturb the young woman from the weaver's, who was standing at the table looking up at a portrait that hung over the chimney-piece. In the long strip of looking-glass that divided the mantle-shelf from the picture-frame the face of the gazing girl, whose back was to the door, was reflected, and Mrs. O'Kelly had not taken two steps into the room before she stopped and stood quite still in astonishment. The upraised face framed in its shabby little black bonnet which she saw in the glass of course belonged to the young woman who had brought her tabinet from the

weaver's, and yet to Mrs. O'Kelly's eyes at that moment it appeared to be exactly the same face as that of the lady in the picture on which its eyes were so earnestly fixed.

Recovering from her surprise, Mrs. O'Kelly spoke, and Marcella Grace, startled to find that she had so far forgotten herself, in her study of the picture, as to fail to hear the lady enter the room, turned quickly round, coloring deeply.

"It was you who brought the poplin? Yes; well, please to tell Mr. Grace that I like it very much, and will do my best to get him some orders," said Mrs. O'Kelly, having got quite to the other side of the table, where she could see the weaver's messenger in a better light. Then she dropped into a chair, and looked long at the girl, turned away and poked the fire, and at last faced the girl again and stared at her.

"Thank you," said Marcella; "shall you require the piece of gray poplin you spoke about? My father would like to know."

"No—that is, yes. Wait a moment, young woman. I am a little tired, and I forget this moment what I wanted to say to you."

She put her hand to her head, and holding it there, looked covertly at the face of the portrait.

"Yes, it is a remarkable likeness," she was thinking, "a very unaccountable likeness. How in the world can there be such a resemblance between my poor dead sister and this weaver's girl?"

"Are you Mr. Grace's daughter?" she asked, as Marcella stood patiently waiting her pleasure. Now that her passing blush had disappeared, the girl was very pale, and the clear dark beauty of her eyes, with their proud yet tender gravity of expression, struck the old lady forcibly.

"Yes," said Marcella, "you may safely trust me with any message to him."

"I don't doubt it," said Mrs. O'Kelly, absently, not knowing what she was saying. She felt so strangely attracted to this weaver's girl that she could not bear to let her go out of her presence without further parley; and yet she could think of no pretence upon which to detain her. Feeling that some effort was necessary, she struggled to make one.

"Well, my dear, your father is a very clever weaver, and I want to talk about him and his work. You see, it is raining, and I hope you are not in a hurry."

"Not at all," said Marcella, "though I do not mind the rain."

"Now, I wonder if Murphy would think it very extraordinary if I asked him to bring the girl a cup of tea? Well, I don't care if he does. I am mistress in my own house. And I *will* know something more about this handsome creature," thought Mrs. O'Kelly; and she rang the bell.

"Murphy, make some fresh tea, and bring it here."

"Is it here, ma'am?"

"Yes, Murphy."

"I will, ma'am;" and Murphy stared and withdrew.

"Now, my dear, take off your wet cloak and sit down. You

must know I have taken it into my head to patronize poplin, and I am doing my very best to stir up a feeling for it among my acquaintances."

"You are very good, madam," said Marcella, as the old lady helped her to take off her cloak and made her sit near the fire. The tea was brought, and while the girl drank it, Mrs. O'Kelly proceeded to explain to her all about the objections which the fashionable ladies were making to the old-fashioned dyes, and to impress upon her that there was a necessity for introducing new ones in the manufacture of poplin. An hour ago she could not have believed that she should ever be induced to advocate so absurd a movement, but in her eagerness to see more of this interesting young woman, she had grasped at the subject as affording the only excuse she could think of for a conversation.

Marcella listened with interest, but when the lady had ceased speaking, said, sighing,

"I fear, madam, my father is not young enough to make efforts to improve his trade. I understand your meaning perfectly, and I hope the younger weavers may profit by your advice. But my poor father's day for such things is over, I am greatly afraid."

Mrs. O'Kelly listened, wondering to hear how well she expressed herself.

"Well, we shall see," she said; "I do not mean to lose sight of your father, however." And then she prolonged the conversation, by various little artifices inducing the girl to speak her mind, till at last she could make no further excuse for detaining her, and allowed her to depart.

As it was now quite dusk, Mrs. O'Kelly rang for her reading-lamp, and when again left alone, stood before the fireplace holding the light above her head and gazing at her sister's portrait. Truly, the face was wonderfully like the young face under the little black bonnet that had confronted her for the last half-hour. There was the same broad brow, expressive of mingled sentiment and strength, the same tender mouth, the same grave and steadfast eyes. The girl in the picture had more color in her face, and was richly dressed, and her dark hair was arranged in a by-gone fashion; but yet the likeness remained. What a curious accidental resemblance!

That night Mrs. O'Kelly wakened with a start out of her first sleep, thinking her young sister long years dead, laid in her grave at the age of twenty-one, was standing by her bed and had spoken to her. "These likenesses do spring up among branches of the same family, skipping a generation or two," was the thought standing clearly in her mind, as if some one had said the words to her; and she lay awake all night after that, revolving the curious suggestion in her brain. How could the daughter of a weaver have any connection with her family? And then an echo of her own words, spoken to Father Daly, came floating across her memory—"there was one who sunk in the world and was forgotten. He might have left heirs, but one could hardly hope now to discover them, if they exist." Long before the tardy daylight came, Mrs. O'Kelly had worked herself into

a feverish state over these fancies, and was down-stairs half an hour earlier than usual, studying again the features of the long-dead sister, who had been the darling of her early youth.

"I must see the girl again," she decided, "or I shall have a fever. I will send for patterns of all the colors of poplins at present made. That will be a good excuse. Probably by another light the young woman will look quite different. I was disturbed yesterday, and in a condition to become the prey of distressing fancies."

In the mean time Marcella had taken her way home, well pleased at hearing her father's work commended, yet fearing that he would resent the lady's suggestions for improvement. She knew he believed his work to be, as it stood, the most perfect fabric in the world. Now, if he would only teach her his art, she would strive to profit by the hints offered; and if a good market were to open up, she might employ others to help in the work. A bright idea occurred to her, that if she could learn, unknown to him, from some other weaver in the neighborhood, she might insure a certain development for her plans before telling him of their existence. Then she could happily provide for his old age, and at the same time find full play for her own industrial activity. Having arrived so far in her bright speculations, she suddenly remembered that money might be necessary in order to start her fairly. How hard that she seemed to be driven back from every opening which hope and energy pointed out to her! Where in all the wide world could she find even one pound to start her upon a profitable career?

Wrapped in these thoughts, she had threaded the gayest thoroughfares of Dublin, without even seeing the people or the shops, but now, having arrived at the foot of Dame Street, before proceeding up Cork Hill towards the Castle, she shook herself out of her dreams and noticed the crowd standing right in her way, staring at the placards hung out before the office of an evening newspaper. With a painful start she suddenly remembered some things that had for the moment passed from her mind—the curious events of the night before, and the terrible fact of the murder committed in the streets not far from her home. For the placards on the newspaper office were declaring the news of the murder in huge letters to the world, and announcing a great reward for the apprehension of the murderer, or for information which might lead to the same.

She stood for a few moments gazing at the placards, with a sharp line drawn between her smooth brows, while her imagination realized the thing that had occurred, and her heart grew chill with the horror of it. Then with a shudder she drew her thin mantle more closely round her, and turned her face away from the staring letters on the wall, and began to make her way as skilfully as she was able through the crowd.

Doing so, she started and drew back a little, then slightly turned so as to get another glimpse of a face and figure standing on the pavement, with eyes fixed on the newspaper placards. "One thousand pounds reward!" proclaimed the great letters on which this gazer's eyes were fixed. It was the hero of last night's adventure

who stood there in the daylight before her, the man whom she had hidden in the closet, and whom the police had searched for in vain. Had it all been a dream, or had this noble-looking man, this gentleman every inch, really lain concealed at her mercy, actually placed his liberty and safety in her hands? Mechanically she put her hand to her breast to feel the ring that hung round her neck, and the small, hard circlet, found by her touch even through the folds of her dress, assured her of the reality of much besides its own existence.

Another glance at the gentleman standing in the crowd reading the newspaper placards convinced her as thoroughly that this was the man. There were the tall figure and brave carriage, also the pale, clean-cut features, piercing gray eyes, and forehead indicative of high resolve. His level brows were knit in thought as he stood gazing at the sinister proclamations. Having observed him eagerly for a few moments, Marcella became suddenly fearful that he might wheel round and see her so watching him, and she turned and hurried forward on her way.

And all through the streets as she went, with the darkness descending upon her, she heard the little newspaper boys shrieking their direful tidings along the pavements: "*Terrible murder in Dublin streets last night. One thousand pounds reward for any information of the murderers!*" And she began to run, to escape out of reach of the piercing and ill-omened cries.

CHAPTER IV.

DISCOVERIES.

During the next few days Marcella traversed many times that part of the city lying between the Liberties and Merrion Square; for Mrs. O'Kelly's interest in the girl had no way decreased, and she made many excuses for bringing the weaver's daughter to her side. Her father's objection to the idea of new dyes "which the rale ould quality in the days when Dublin *had* quality" never thought of wanting, his increasing inability to work, and her own desire to take up his art herself, and improve upon it, and devote her energies to its development, made fruitful subjects of conversation between her patroness and herself, after the old lady had once for all won her regard and confidence. And meanwhile Mrs. O'Kelly had contrived to draw the girl's personal history from her lips. Before a week had elapsed she had learned all about the lady-mother whose bitter reverses of fortune had driven her to sit meekly at the weaver's fireside.

There was a month of intense excitement for Mrs. O'Kelly, during which she had almost daily consultations with her solicitor, and frequently wept as she sat alone in the evenings under the portrait in her library. So lonely had she grown to feel in her great drawing-

room up-stairs, that she had caused her work-basket, novel, and favorite footstool to be carried down to the room where her sister's portrait hung, and where she was accustomed to receive Marcella in the mornings. And here she ransacked old desks, and sorted old family letters and papers, and eagerly read the communications forwarded to her every evening by her solicitor.

At the end of a month her excitement rose to a climax when the result of investigations into the fate of a certain cousin of hers, who had ruined himself after the fashion of certain Connaught gentry of those times and disappeared from society, was announced to her, and when the supposition started in her mind by Marcella's likeness to a family portrait finally gave place to certainty. On the formal page, and in the stiff terms of a lawyer's letter, such positive assurance was conveyed to her one night as led her to drop upon her rheumatic knees and lift up her trembling hands to heaven, and thank God that a daughter had been given to her old age, and, we fear we must add, that the intolerable O'Flahertys were defeated.

The next morning found her driving through Dublin mud into the objectionable region of the Liberties, with the intention of seeing old Grace and breaking her extraordinary news to him. When the neat brougham stopped before the weaver's door, the neighbors said to each other that Michael Grace was beginning to go up in the world again.

Marcella was out upon some message for her father, and the weaver was smoking his mid-day pipe alone, when the lady, having climbed his stair with difficulty, ushered herself into his presence.

"I have come to see you, Mr. Grace. I am Mrs. O'Kelly."

After a little preliminary skirmishing about poplins, she would proceed to open her battle with this coarse and common old man, who, unfortunately, stood between her and her desires.

"Bedad, ma'am, and it's welcome ye are to see the whole of my management. An' I hope it's another grand gown ye're goin' to order—something beautiful and bright, none o' them pale, spiritless things they do be havin' in the silks and satins in the shop-windows nowadays."

"I hope to give you an excellent order, Mr. Grace. I like the old colors myself and will always wear them, but some of my friends cry out for more sickly tints. Fashion is a ridiculous thing; is it not, Mr. Grace?"

"'Deed, an' it is, ma'am. Niver a word of lie in that. But niver will Michael Grace sit before a loom to weave such rubbitch as *thim* pinks and greens," he said, pitching a little bundle of patterns of silk contemptuously on the table. "Why, ma'am, I've wove poplin that 'ud stand alone for her Excellencyess the Lady Liftenant—not this one, but her that was in the Castle whin I was a younger man, ma'am, an' was a master-weaver; an' ye wouldn't have found holes in my stairs then, ma'am. Niver to spake," he added, with a change of tone, "of all that I wove for my own wife, ma'am—her that was a lady born and bred, ma'am, body an' soul, an' betther blood niver came out o' the province of ould Connaught."

It was only his way of dragging his wife's name, half through boastfulness, half through genuine sentiment, into every conversation he held, no matter with whom. The neighbors knew this, and would say, "Ay, Misther Grace, thrue for you, indeed," and pass on, but Mrs. O'Kelly thought the confidence special to herself, and very remarkable. Had any one prepared him for her coming? At all events this outspokenness of his smoothed the way for her own difficult communication.

"I know, Mr. Grace, I know all about that," she said, trying hard to patronize merely and not to betray her nervousness — "and it is about your wife I have come here to talk to you."

Grace stared, and then quietly laid aside the piece of grass-green tabinet he had been flourishing about in the light while he spoke.

"I don't see what you can know about her," he said, "seein' that none o' her own sort ever looked the way she went, not for years before she fell so low as to become an honest weaver's wife. No ladies came visitin' to see Mrs. Michael Grace, ma'am. Them that had been her own left her to break her bit o' a heart here at a fireside that was no fit shelter for her. And now, ma'am, what have ye got to say about her?"

"Only this, that I have just discovered that your wife was the daughter of a first cousin of mine. And you must not scold me, Mr. Grace, for I never saw her, and her father was the person to blame."

Grace stood looking at his visitor and patroness with a dazed expression, linked his loose hands together, and drew himself up with an air of incredible dignity.

"It makes no odds about blame now, ma'am," he said. "I did my best for her, and she's gone where all the fine cousins in the world can do nothin' for her. The angels are her cousins now, ma'am, many thanks to you."

"But, Mr. Grace, though it cannot touch her, this may make a difference to her daughter!"

At these words the weaver's entire aspect underwent a sudden change. All the dignity and sentiment vanished from his face, mingled cunning and triumph twinkled in his eyes, and his very attitude was expressive of the acuteness of his perception that something had turned up for his advantage.

"That's as may be, ma'am. But ye must remember she's my daughter too. What was it you were thinkin' of doin' for her, ma'am?"

"Your extreme frankness makes my task easier than I expected it to be," said Mrs. O'Kelly. "Mr. Grace, I will be as candid as yourself. I am a childless old woman, and I have thought of adopting your daughter as my own. I will place her in the position of life for which nature has fitted her, and to which her mother belonged; and I will provide for her handsomely at my death."

"See that, now," said Grace, fumbling among his patterns, and pretending to give only half his attention to what the lady was saying. "Sure an' it would be an illigant settlin' for her. An' what would you be thinkin' of doin' for myself, ma'am?"

"But, Mr. Grace, you are not my blood-relation."

"No, ma'am; and nothin' at all, of coorse, to the girl that you're takin' from me—the child that I looked to for the comfort of my last days—not many of them, indeed, will I see."

After this a long conversation followed, and the end of it all was that Mrs. O'Kelly offered the weaver fifty pounds a year to give up his daughter, on condition that he was to see her no more, except on rare occasions, when she might find it convenient to pay him a visit. But this offer Grace indignantly refused.

"She'll be here again to-morrow," he reflected, "doublin' her pension to me—and in the mane time I will talk to the girl about it. Sure it is we'll make a handsome thing out of it. Only we mustn't be in too great a hurry settlin' our bargain. Och, an' faix it's a fine sight betther than marryin' the girl agin her will, and dependin' for the rest o' my time on a son-in-law! An', bedad, when the girl gets her own way wid the lady, she'll be takin' her ould father out to drive wid her in her carriage every day. An' it's dinin' wid the Lord Liftenant you'll be, Michael Grace, before you die. Divil a doubt of it!"

Finding the old fellow grew more impracticable the longer she stayed, Mrs. O'Kelly desisted from further bargaining on this occasion and departed, looking forward with keen pleasure to the unfolding of her intentions to Marcella, who as yet had heard no hint of the changes in store for her.

When Marcella returned home with her scanty marketing, she found her father wrapped in clouds of tobacco-smoke, and beaming with mysterious delight. He broke his news to her cautiously, with a half fear that she would fly out of the house before he had finished, and bestow herself unconditionally on her prosperous kinswoman.

"It's a little story I was makin' up to amuse myself," he said; "an', if it comes thrue, we'll have no more need for work; so you needn't be takin' looks at the loom. An' ye needn't be gettin' in a fright nayther about marryin', for, if it comes to pass, it's a duke you'll be condescendin' to for your husband. An' maybe it's the Queen herself 'll be recavin' us at her table—the pair of us!"

"Father!" said Marcella, reproachfully, thinking he was jeering at her.

"Now, what title will I be afther takin' if they offer me one? My Lord Grace would sound well, I'm thinkin'. An' isn't that what they call the dukes, machree?"

"Dear father, I'm sure you would not care for a title if you had one."

"Wouldn't I, miss?" said Grace, chuckling with pleasure at her utter unconsciousness of the great fortune that was awaiting her. "But let me tell you my story, alanna."

"Yes, father dear, you can tell it while I'm making your tea," said Marcella, glad to find him in so pleasant a humor, and beginning to arrange the delft teacups.

"My good little girl," said the old man, patting her cheek, "you and I will never part, mavourneen, while the sod is growin' undher

my feet and not over them. Afther that you can do as you plase, Marcella."

Marcella put an arm round his neck and returned his caress.

"Mind, you have promised that," she said, playfully; "and you are going to teach me to work and to dye the silks to please the fine ladies—"

"Oh, you foolish child; sure it's you that'll be wearin' the silks. Aisy, now, an' I'll tell you the whole story."

It was a long time before Marcella could take it in. She thought her father was amusing himself with idle dreams of what might happen, as he had always been rather fond of doing. It was clear the lady had been to see him in her absence, and had been particularly kind, and her friendliness had suggested the extravagant fancies in which the old man had since been indulging over his pipe.

"And supposin'," he said, "that Mrs. O'Kelly was to declare that she was your mother's cousin. 'An' bein' very rich, an' without a child,' says she, 'what can I do but take your daughter for my own? An' I'll put her in her mother's shoes,' says she, 'an' well becomes her to stand in them; for she's a handsome girl,' says Mrs. O'Kelly, 'an' a credit to the genthry of Connaught.'"

Marcella had got her sewing, and was listening half amused and half impatient to her father's romancing. Such things as this did often happen in stories or in dreams. When she was younger, she had indulged in wild imaginings about her mother's people, wondering would they ever think of her, find her out, and encourage her. But she was too old in experience to expect any such miracle now. And it pained her to have such bright impossibilities flung into her thoughts.

Seeing that none of his hints conveyed anything of the truth to her mind, Grace at last got provoked at her.

"Marcella," he said, "will you put down that sewin' and listen to me? All that I have been sayin' to you is gospel truth. An' you're to put on your bonnet and go over an' have a talk about it all with your cousin, Mrs. O'Flaherty O'Kelly of Merrion Square, this evenin'. Only, mind, you and me are to keep together, Marcella, no matter what she says. I'm not goin' to give up my child, an' be lonely in my latter days, not to plase no fine madam of a Connaught genthry-woman, you can tell her."

But Marcella could not be induced to set out for Merrion Square that evening on such an errand. She begged to be allowed to put off the visit till morning, and Grace, confident in the safety of his cause, consented to humor her. "Let it be, then," he said; "maybe it's as well. You'll want a few hours to think what you'd better say to her. These fine people have the whip-hand of such as you an' me, for their edication's in their favor, an' they know what words to put into their speeches, and what words to leave out o' them. There's a dale o' differ' between dixonary words, though plain-talkin' people would hardly believe it. An' everything will depend on the bargain we can make wid her."

Still Marcella could not bring herself quite to believe in his story.

His persistence forced her to conclude that there was some foundation for his romance, that Mrs. O'Kelly had spoken of some relationship she had discovered between herself and the weaver's wife, and meant to be helpful to them on account of it; but further than this her common-sense would not allow her to go in crediting the promise of a change of fortune, although her imagination struggled wildly to seize on all that was suggested and fly away with it. She lay awake all night, pondering the likelihoods of the case, and the utmost she could admit was that Mrs. O'Kelly, who had already been so wonderfully friendly, was going to assist her towards honorably earning her bread in such a way that she could support her father in his fast declining years, and no longer need to dwell among the lowest population of the city. In all this lay much cause for joy, but, accustomed to disappointment and privation all her life, she did not know how to believe in it. The warning conveyed by her father's words, "Mind, we are to keep together—I'm not goin' to give up my child," seemed to hint at some difficulty in the way of the fulfilment of the rich lady's intentions, a difficulty, perhaps, not to be overcome. Certainly she would never abandon her father—that was beyond question. Was it not chiefly for his sake that a change of fortune would be so acceptable to his daughter? It was hardly conceivable to her that any one could contemplate the idea of separating her from him, now when he needed her so much, and she would have dismissed the doubt as foolish, only that a long experience of living by the patronage of the better classes had taught her the rarity of their sympathy with the natural affections of the poor. The problem of what was meant and intended by the lady's strange communication and promises, exaggerated as they might be by her father's sanguine imagination, became at last too much for her patience and her incredulity, and she counted the hours till the moment might arrive when she could hear from Mrs. O'Kelly's own lips what wonders she proposed to work within the future of two humble lives.

Her father was up early, and pressed her to eat a good breakfast, showing her many extraordinary little attentions, and the thought struck upon her heart with a pang that she was perhaps more precious to him now, when good-fortune seemed about to drop upon her, than she had been when suffering hunger and hardship in order that he might be as comfortable as it was within her power to make him. Starting from the thought, however, as if it had been a crime, she found a thousand excuses for him.

As much to relieve her own suspense as his impatience, she hurried early across the city upon her errand of fate.

Mrs. O'Kelly was waiting for her with a feverish anxiety that more than equalled in intensity the eagerness of old Grace himself. As soon as the girl appeared, and they were alone in the library together, she took her by both hands and looked, with feeling that was almost passion, in her eyes.

"Is this my child, my adopted daughter?" she said, with a quaver of emotion and age in her voice. "Marcella, I have a great deal to say to you. I have been watching for you all morning, my dear."

CHAPTER V.

AN IRISH CINDERELLA.

MARCELLA'S expectations were broken and scattered by such a greeting. The blood rushed to her face and fled away again instantly as she stammered,

"I do not understand. My father told me something, but I have not been able to believe it."

"But you must believe it, my dear. You are the only relative I have left in the world, and I had not a suspicion of your existence till I saw you standing here the first day you came, and my breath was taken away by your likeness to that portrait. You were looking up at it—"

"I remember; it made me think of my mother," said the girl, "though I wondered why, for I do not recollect ever seeing her."

"I knew it could not be a chance resemblance, and it set me thinking and inquiring. The thing was easy enough to trace once the question was started; and now you are going to be my own child; and I have been so lonely. I am ceasing to care for the world, and I want a daughter, Marcella—it was my sister's name, her name whose face you have got. And now take off your bonnet and come with me, my child."

Marcella had listened in glad amazement. All the wild dreams of a future lifted above the sordid level upon which she had lived—dreams which she had kept aloof as enemies that could only rob her of what little contentment she possessed—rushed upon her now as friends claiming to be recognized. The moderate expectations she had dwelt upon during the last few hours were forgotten; a brilliant reality shone into her eyes and blinded her. She suddenly burst into tears.

"I do not wonder," exclaimed the old lady, wiping her own eyes. "It has been too great a surprise. But I could not keep the secret any longer. I never could break the news of anything to any one in my life. And, besides, I was so impatient to take possession of you. Do not cry, my darling. You shall never return to that nasty den any more."

Marcella stilled her sobs and tried to speak.

"My father—" she began.

"Oh, my dear, I will arrange with him. I have told him my intentions, and no doubt he will be glad to agree with them, once you are out of his hands. You have only to assert yourself a little—you are twenty-one, you have told me—and you will see that everything will come right."

Marcella had by this time overcome her agitation and regained her presence of mind.

"You are very good," she said, gratefully; "I cannot find words to thank you for your goodness. But I can never consent to abandon my father in his old age."

"My dear, you need not use such terrible words. You shall not be asked to abandon him. We will make him as comfortable as he can be, and you shall go to see him as often as it is practicable. Of course you must feel, Marcella—"

"I do feel," said Marcella, gently, "I feel it all, and that is why I will not desert him. He is old and failing in health, and he has loved me and cherished me all my life. I must be his nurse, his child, his hands, eyes, and staff as long as God leaves him to me. And so, dear friend, if instead of giving me all these brilliant things you offer, if you would merely help me to get work, put me in a way of being able to support him, I will bless you, and he will bless you every day we have to live."

"I don't know that," said Mrs. O'Kelly, beginning to get angry. "I don't at all know that. I am sure the old gentleman will not be so easily satisfied."

"You mistake him, madam. He would never consent to part with me."

"Then he is a fool," said Mrs. O'Kelly, "and I am sorely disappointed in you both! In that case I suppose you must be allowed to return to him."

And though the interview was prolonged considerably after this difficult point in the conversation had been reached, no better understanding was arrived at, and Marcella returned to the Liberties with a much heavier heart than that with which she had left it, Mrs. O'Kelly having parted with her in an ecstasy of displeasure.

On arriving home, however, strong in her consciousness that she had been true to her father and obeyed his warning to suffer no arrangement to be made that would part him from his daughter, she met with a very different reception from that which she had fairly earned, and had a right to expect. Old Grace's anger at hearing that she had allowed their friend to quarrel with her was harder to bear than Mrs. O'Kelly's feverish disappointment.

He scolded her well for not exerting herself to make an advantageous bargain with the old lady, He had trusted her to do the business, believed in her willingness to be of use to him, placed all his affairs in her hands. He was only checked by the sight of Marcella's fast-flowing tears.

"Oh, father!" she said, bitterly, "do not say that you would have sold me to her if she had only paid you well enough!"

She stretched out her young hands imploringly as she cried to him, and the soft corner in his heart was reached.

"I did not mean rightly that, my girl," he said, "only that we oughtn't to have quarrelled with her. But let's say no more about it. I don't know but that I might die if I couldn't see your darlin' face no more!"

And Marcella was comforted; and having prayed Heaven to send her work from some quarter, that she might nourish this loving father in his declining days, she slept soundly upon her sorrows.

But Mrs. O'Kelly was not so easily consoled. For many weeks she had so lived on the certainty of having Marcella for her own that she could not reconcile herself to disappointment. She blamed herself for her hasty temper, acknowledged that she had been unreasonable, and admitted that the girl's determination not to give her father up only proved the sterling qualities of her heart. Before another day had passed she was more in love with Marcella than ever, and busy with schemes for ensnaring the girl into her keeping. She must manage to do it without alarming her filial devotion. She must gradually wean her from that dreadful old man, who at all cost must be kept down, concealed in the shadows of his original obscurity. At last she hit upon a plan which she thought must be successful, and it proved to be so.

She made another pilgrimage to the Liberties, the result of which was that the weaver permitted his daughter to go on a visit to Mrs. O'Kelly at Merrion Square. Grace was well pleased at the arrangement, considering that once his daughter had gained a footing in the old lady's home and heart, he might ultimately hope to make his own terms. Mrs. O'Kelly was satisfied, thinking that Marcella, having tasted the sweets of young ladyhood, having been dressed, admired, accustomed to drawing-room life, would be found very amenable to reason, through fear of being thrown back into poverty and squalor. As for Marcella herself, seeing that both father and friend were content, she felt free to give herself up to her young enjoyment of the hour, and to live like the heroine of a fairy romance.

Not to shock the proprieties of any who might chance to look on in her home at the transformation of the weaver's girl into Mrs. O'Kelly's niece, as she called her (fondly imagining that the girl might have been the daughter of that sister of hers whose portrait she resembled, and whose name she bore), the lady was prudent in her arrangement of the affair. She left home for a few days, only, however, to stay at a hotel not far away, where Marcella met her and was transformed. No one could have imagined that the girl in sordid clothing who passed up the staircase of the hotel, and whom nobody could have sworn to have seen pass down again, had any one thought about so insignificant a matter, was one and the same with the elegant young lady who was found seated with Mrs. O'Kelly when the waiter served her lunch. After a few days' shopping, walking about the fashionable thoroughfares, and living at the hotel which seemed to the girl from the Liberties a palace of splendors, the two ladies were met one day at Westland Row railway-station by Mrs. O'Kelly's carriage, and were conducted home in state to Merrion Square.

It was immediately known, and much talked of in her circle, that Mrs. O'Kelly had received on a visit a young relative who had been living abroad, and, having lost her parents and finished her education, was just in such an interesting position as to excite the old

lady's sympathies. She had gone to London to meet the girl on her way from Paris, and was making as much fuss about her as if she had been her actual child.

On Mrs. O'Kelly's next reception day her drawing-rooms were crowded with friends and acquaintances curious to behold Marcella, who sat making tea in a pretty, close-fitting dress of dull crimson cloth which set off her dark beauty to advantage. Miss O'Flaherty was the first to arrive and the last to take her leave, and made many bold attempts to cross-question the suddenly discovered niece as to her antecedents, all of which attacks, however, Mrs. O'Kelly adroitly foiled, enjoying intensely the discomfiture of her enemy.

Marcella felt too timid in her new position to enter into prolonged conversation with any one, and took refuge in her task of tea-making, answering in few words when she was spoken to, and referring everything to her patroness. Yet her natural self-possession gave her so well-bred an air that nobody could call her shy. After the last visitor had departed, Mrs. O'Kelly congratulated her on the success of her first appearance in society.

"You must gain more confidence in yourself, Marcella. You have less brogue than Julia O'Flaherty, and there was not a woman here to-day who can cross a floor as well as you do it. Just go out of the room, my dear, and come in again and up to my chair. You may laugh if you please, but it is a pretty art to move about a room with grace. It comes to you naturally, of course, with your nicely turned O'Kelly ankles and your graceful O'Kelly arms. Now, Julia O'Flaherty's feet are like the feet of a clothes-horse."

The old lady lay back complacently in her chair and stroked Marcella's hands, which she had of late been bathing with perfumes and unguents to remove the traces of toil from the shapely fingers. And she went on unfolding her ideas and intentions.

"I have been asked several times to-day whether I did not intend presenting you at the drawing-room, but I have made up my mind that it would not do, as you have not yet consented to be altogether my daughter, Marcella. It would not be proper, if you think of afterwards returning to live in the Liberties, my darling. And yet you must see a little life while you are with me. I said to the inquisitive people that, though you were rather young to go out, I did not know but that I might take you to the St. Patrick's ball. I can manage to have you privately presented to his Excellency before the ball begins. You shall have a pretty dress, and you will see the dancing, which will be new to you. And after that we shall perhaps have a little dance ourselves."

Marcella expressed her delight at the prospect of so much pleasure, and thought of the long-past Patrick's ball at which her mother had gayly danced, little dreaming of the dreary fate in store for her. How strange was life! Certainly but one month ago, if any one had told her that she, Marcella, would be going to a Patrick's ball, she would have taken the prophet for a lunatic.

And yet she was certainly going to the ball. A pretty dress was ordered, and Mrs. O'Kelly displayed to her the pearl ornaments

which she herself had not worn for long, and which she believed Julia O'Flaherty already counted as her own. "But I am not sure that she shall have them," said the old lady; "not if some people behave themselves nicely. They exactly suit a *débutante*, and it is a long time since poor Julia went to her first ball. They will go charmingly with this fleecy white dress of yours, which makes you look as if clothed in snow."

CHAPTER VI.

THE PATRICK'S BALL.

THE eventful night arrived, and Mrs. O'Kelly, wearing her tabinet train, and followed by Marcella, white and fresh as a dew-drop in her glistening silk and pearls, set out in the O'Kelly brougham for Dublin Castle. The old castle-yard, witness of many a strange scene in Ireland's history, was alive with carriages, cabs, and all manner of vehicles down to the jaunting-car which brought young men in their dancing-pumps, who had fallen back on the friendly jarvey, finding cabs were scarce—a scarcity not to be wondered at, seeing that in Dublin carriages are less plentiful than hack conveyances.

While they awaited their turn to be set down, Mrs. O'Kelly related anecdotes of the ancient splendors of Dublin Castle not derived from books, for she was no great reader, so much as from memory of what had been related to her by her mother. About a hundred years ago, or so, it might have been truly said that there were gay doings at Dublin Castle, when a legion of the nobility inhabited the magnificent old houses in and about the city, which are now either mouldering to decay, rifled of as much of their carvings and decorations as can be carried off, or turned into museums, public libraries, and asylums for the sick and unfortunate, where exquisitely adorned ceilings spread rich canopies over the hospital bed of pain, and students ascend the royal staircases at the top of which dukes in former days received their guests.

Mrs. O'Kelly having, by special favor, been allowed to present her young charge to the Lord Lieutenant in another room, was soon seen leading her towards the entrance of St. Patrick's Hall.

"There is Julia O'Flaherty standing at the top of the stairs talking to Bryan Kilmorey!" exclaimed Mrs. O'Kelly, in a low tone, more to herself than to Marcella, as they stood wedged in a corner. "Why does the girl wear pink with that beet-root color in her cheeks? How much she has got to say to Bryan, though she does sneer so at his politics! Dear me, if people would only think it their duty to keep moving on! Why does she not get into the ball-room? She will dance all night if she can get any one to dance with her, and she knows he never dances—"

Here a movement in the ascending clouds of silk and tulle and

velvet, a stir which set jewels flashing and drew forth sighs of relief from the impatient, and little notes of low laughter from the joyous and sweet-tempered, swept Marcella and her chaperon some steps nearer to the door which was the goal of their desires, and Marcella was able to see Julia O'Flaherty and the gentleman to whom she was talking. He stood with his back to her now; but something in the turn of the head was strangely familiar to Marcella. She held her breath for a moment, till the man, happening to turn, glanced towards her and looked her right in the face. Then she saw that the gentleman whom Mrs. O'Kelly called Bryan Kilmorey was the hero of her midnight adventure, the man whom she had sheltered from pursuit of the police, who had given her the ring, and whom she had last seen reading the proclamation of reward offered for the apprehension of the perpetrator of the murder which had been committed on that eventful night.

He looked her straight in the face as she advanced, and his glance lingered on her with such an expression of interest that she thought herself recognized in spite of the change in her condition and apparel. Would he speak to her? she asked herself rapidly. What would he say to her? Would he allude to the secret he and she shared between them? Another movement of the crowd now carried them along the landing, and she stood by his side.

"Mrs. O'Kelly, will you not speak to me?" said the voice Marcella remembered well. "What have I done that I should be cut dead?"

"Oh, is that you, Bryan? Who would expect to meet a person of your politics within the Castle walls, or such a non-frequenter of dances at a Patrick's ball? It is so long since I have seen you in evening dress that I scarcely recognized you."

Bryan Kilmorey smiled an amused smile that became him well. The grave, stern face that had confronted Marcella in the mouldering-room of the old house in Weaver's Square vanished, and for a moment she felt that she did not know this man.

"You see even a vagabond like me sometimes wants to get a peep at respectable people," he said. "Miss O'Flaherty has been kindly telling me who the people are who have outgrown me." Then he added in a lower tone, "I hope you will overlook my sins and shortcomings so far as to introduce me to your niece."

"She is not my niece, and I don't know about introducing you at present. She is coming with me now to walk round the rooms. Later in the evening I will think about it, unless I hear some bad stories of you in the mean time."

And passing him by with her chin elevated, the old lady swept on into the ball-room, followed by Marcella.

"She is undeniably handsome," said Miss O'Flaherty, looking after the girl; "but there is nothing in her. She is the most silent person I ever met. Has lived abroad, and has not a word to tell about any of the places she has seen."

Shortly afterwards, Bryan Kilmorey having left, Miss O'Flaherty, happy in the company of a wealthy unmarried colonel, moved into the ball-room and looked about eagerly for another glimpse of Mar-

cella. She was already in the centre of a little cluster of admirers. Her plea that she could not dance did not deprive her of their attentions. The appearance of a new face—and such a new face—had already made a sensation in a society where every one knows every one else, sometimes a little too well, and the freshest beauties are tired of all too soon.

Kilmorey could not account for the peculiar effect which the sight of that particular countenance had wrought on him. The beautiful serious intelligence of the wide gray eyes struck him as something familiar. Where could he have seen her before? They said she had lived abroad, and he had not been on the Continent for two or three years. He fancied, too, that her eyes had met his with a friendly expression, that she looked as if she wished to speak to him. No; it must be only that that interested "asking" expression of the eyes was natural to her. He never could have seen her before to-night.

Nothing in her! Certainly her appearance must be a cheat if that were a just judgment. Silent she might be through unaccustomedness to the subjects of conversation which occupied the chatterers around her; but he felt a singular desire to speak to her. There was a particular quality of voice, a soft, rich note recurring and giving to simple words a sort of pathetic sweetness which somehow, he felt sure, went with the expression of those brows and lips. Where he had heard such a voice he did not know, but the tones of it came to his imagination as he looked at her face. Could he have dreamed of this woman long ago, and only remembered the dream on beholding her? Nonsense! Or were these the symptoms of love at first sight? Equally absurd! for he was not a man who was much interested by women, as a rule, and marrying was far from his thoughts.

Later he succeeded in getting introduced to her, and in obtaining leave to take her to the refreshment-room for an ice.

"'Trust me, I will not talk politics to her," he said, smiling; "and, pariah as I am, I will be careful not to let my shadow fall on her plate."

And Marcella found herself moving through the crowd with her hand on his arm. So keenly mindful was she of their former meeting, so full of consciousness of all that had passed between them before, that she expected him to say, as soon as they were alone in the crowd, "What is the meaning of this? How do I find you here? I thought you were a poor girl whom I should never see again, and with whom my secret would on that account be safe. Can I be sure you will guard it from all these people among whom it seems you live, as I do? And in which character have I met you masquerading —as the poverty-stricken girl in the Liberties, or as the relative of a wealthy gentlewoman?

But he said nothing of the kind. He only made some remarks about the antiquity of St. Patrick's Hall, and concerning the brilliant and tragic scenes that had succeeded each other within the walls of the Castle. He talked to her for some little time, hearing only enough of her voice to satisfy him that his expectation had made no

mistake as to its quality; and then, having found her an ice and a chair, he made an effort to relieve his mind of the perplexity which had been increasing on him with every glance of her eyes and every murmur from her lips.

"You have lived abroad, Miss O'Kelly. How do you find our damp island after more brilliant climes?"

In an instant Marcella perceived that she had been mistaken, and that he did not recognize her, and she put herself on her guard. She would not disconcert him by revealing herself, although she could not make any effort to keep up Mrs. O'Kelly's little fiction about her foreign rearing. With people like Miss O'Flaherty she had suffered that matter to pass, allowing her ignorance of life abroad to be taken for stupidity, but here she must make bold to tell the honest truth.

"I have never been out of Dublin, Mr. Kilmorey. I am only a poor relation," she added, smiling; "but you must not tell that I have confessed it. Mrs. O'Kelly has been very kind, and I believe she wants to make the best of me. So I am supposed to have seen a great deal of the world—places on which I have never laid my eyes. Please don't tell, for it would vex her."

"I will never tell," he said; "the rack shall not extort it from me. But I am surprised at Mrs. O'Kelly for imagining you needed any such fictitious advantage. And it gives you a difficult part to play. How do you manage it?"

"I hold my tongue," said Marcella, simply. "I am very ignorant, but that is one thing I know how to do."

She emphasized the last words, thinking that in case he should a little later discover her identity, they might recur to his mind and give him confidence.

"It is an excellent talent," he said, "but one that can be too much cultivated. I am glad you have made an exception in my case. It strikes me that if you have never been out of Dublin, Miss O'Kelly, it is possible I may have seen you before. Your face, and even your voice, are strangely familiar to me—familiar although perfectly new. It seems rather as if I had known some one who bore a wonderful resemblance to you."

He stopped abruptly, seeing her cheek redden a little and then turn white. She felt a thrill of alarm lest he should be on the point of discovering her—for his sake rather than hers—not knowing how unpleasantly such discovery might affect him. At the same moment the paleness of her cheek and the anxious glance of her eyes made her resemblance more striking to the face that was haunting him; and suddenly his riddle was read.

"She is like the girl who sheltered me," he thought; "singularly like her both in face and voice. Strange I have noticed before that where a likeness exists between two faces the same resemblance is found in the voices. She was a noble-looking girl in the midst of her poor surroundings. Good heavens! it is the very same face."

Marcella had risen, and now lifted her eyes to his face. The same scene—that strange midnight scene—the open closet door, the moon-

light shining into the crazy old room, the shadow of a crime on the threshold, the echo of pursuit at the door—all were present in both their minds at the moment as she rose and stood before him, and their eyes met.

"The very girl! Oh no, I must be losing my senses. I have startled her with my stare. The sordid gown, the pathetic face, are safe in the Liberties. This delicate maiden in her white frock never perhaps heard of such a quarter. But the likeness accounts for the curious impression she has made on me."

Marcella saw the change in his face, and knew that so far she had escaped detection. The power of circumstance was strong to conceal her identity. She breathed more freely, and a smile came back to her face.

"I have lived so quietly in Dublin," she said, "that I am perfectly new to everybody here. This is my very first appearance in society."

But here Mrs. O'Kelly's voice was heard at her side.

"I want my young lady. She is not accustomed to late hours and I am going to take her home. A young woman who is not out yet, and has still to learn to dance, has no excuse for staying late at a ball. Good-night, Bryan; I am not going to ask you to come to see me till you have given up your evil ways, you Fenian! By-the-way, I hope you are very proud of the last piece of work of your party? Poor Gerald Ffont! it was within these very walls I met him last, and he then said a great deal to me about the wickedness of the people, which I think has been well proved by his murder."

A deep shade crossed Kilmorey's face, but he made no attempt to reply to the old lady's reproaches.

"May I see you down-stairs and get you your cloak?" he said, gravely.

"No, thank you, I don't think you need. A gentleman is waiting outside to look after us. Come, Marcella."

Marcella gave her hand frankly to Kilmorey with a friendly look, and followed her patroness, who lectured her all the way home about Bryan Kilmorey, rather for the satisfaction of saying some things that were in her mind against the man than because she thought it necessary for the girl to hear them.

"I don't wish you, my dear, to take too much notice of this Mr. Kilmorey. In fact, he is rather a thorn in my side, seeing that I have known his people always and was once very fond of himself. He was as nice and promising a lad as ever I knew till he began to take an interest in the Fenian question. That is a good many years ago now, for Bryan is thirty years of age; but a University training at Trinity, and subsequent experiences, have not, evidently, trained the sympathy with Fenianism out of him. He has lately been siding with the low malcontents in the country in a manner which has turned all my affection for him to bitterness. How his poor mother bears it I am sure I do not know, for I seldom see her now, as she never shows her face in society, being an invalid, doubtless in consequence of the wrong-headedness of her son. What brought him

to the ball to-night I cannot think, as he has quite dropped out of society through his extraordinary proclivities. And such a promising young man as that was, full of brave aspirations and noble ideas on every subject; the sort of young man who would have gone to battle to free slaves, or would have kept that bridge long ago like the three what-do-you-call-thems in the history of Greece—would have led a forlorn-hope anywhere if you only gave him a good enough cause. And now to have mixed himself up with low people, to have reduced his rents so far as to cast reproach on the old friends of his family, to beggar himself in the effort to keep the peasants from emigrating, to have lost all ideas of the duties of his caste—"

Here Mrs. O'Kelly's brougham pulled up suddenly at her door, and the stream of her eloquence received a temporary check.

CHAPTER VII.

SACKCLOTH AND ASHES.

MURPHY opened the hall door with a sleepy and aggrieved countenance.

"There's a woman here with a message for you, ma'am, 's been sittin' in the hall these two hours. I couldn't have put her out, barrin' I called in the policeman; an' I didn't rightly like to do that, as she looks a dacent sort of body."

A messenger at one o'clock in the morning! Marcella knew by instinct that the message was for her.

Mrs. O'Kelly divined the same, and sent Murphy away, and pushed her *débutante* into the library while she spoke to the woman, who had risen from the hall chair and fixed her eyes on Marcella, as the girl quickly reappeared.

"Mrs. O'Kelly, I know this woman. Something is wrong with my father."

"Your father is dying," said the woman, "and he's callin' for you. He's been ill these four days, and wouldn't tell us where to look for you. I knowed that grandeur couldn't change ye that much, Marcella, but what you'd want to see him. I ask your pardon, miss, but I don't know how to speak to you rightly in that beautiful dress."

Marcella was already putting off her necklace and bracelets, and throwing them on the hall table.

"Get a cab at once," she said, "and I will change my dress in a moment and go with you. Oh, my poor father, why was I so selfish as to leave you?"

"Marcella, are you quite mad? After all the trouble I have taken to conceal your connection with low people, to think of running out like this to them in the middle of the night! You shall not do it. These people always exaggerate. It will be quite time enough

in the morning, when you go out naturally as a young lady should, and no one need know where you are going."

But Marcella had not waited to hear the last of these rapidly uttered words, but had fled to the top of the house, and was down again, clothed in a dark dress, before her patroness had time to realize what she was doing.

"Marcella, I am shocked and disappointed in you. If you quit this house at such an hour, remember you never come back to it."

"Oh, why did I leave him? why did I ever leave him?" moaned the girl, unfastening the door with her trembling hands. "Come, Mrs. Casey. Oh, Mrs. O'Kelly, don't be angry. I am not ungrateful—but my father—"

The humble messenger stood up and courtesied to the angry lady, and the next moment Mrs. O'Kelly stood alone in the hall in a passion of outraged and injured dignity.

In the mean time Marcella, all her finery vanished, was flying through the streets at a pace with which her companion could hardly keep up. There were no cabs to be seen, and if there had been she had no money. The ill-kept, ill-lighted streets of the Liberties had never looked so dismal as now, their squalor and misery seemed more appalling to Marcella than they had ever seemed before. Arrived at the old house at last, she flung herself on her knees at her father's bedside.

"Whisht, Marcella! Sure I wouldn't have sent for you, darlin', only I haven't many hours to live. Whin I first took sick, I wanted you, but I said, says I, you mustn't be intherferin' wid the crature's good-fortune, Michael Grace. Sure who will look afther her when you're gone if you anger the lady that's good to her? An' when I felt I was goin' to die, I seen everything so different from what it was before. Sure your mother was a lady, Marcella, and the Lord made you to live among ladies, and he sent one of them afther you to take you to your natural place. An' what would the quality be doin' wid me in their way—nothin' but a big blundherin' crature that would be disgracin' you? And sure, my darlin', I'm goin' to heaven to get a sight o' your mother, though God knows it's the angels she'll be keepin' company with, an' not with the likes o' me. Well, well, sure Himself will find a little place for Michael somewhere, for they say heaven's very big, and there's a corner there for everybody that the Lord Jesus took thought of when he died. And more betoken, Father O'Reilly tould me yesterday that the Lord was thinkin' o' *me* on the cross when he died. Did you ever hear the like o' that, Marcella? Of coorse I ought ha' knowed it, but it niver came home to me rightly the way it does now. I seem to see a meanin' in it an' a raison for it; for sure what 'd become of me, a sthranger, pushed suddenly out into the other world, if I hadn't a friend there to be providin' for me?"

The dispensary doctor shook his head when questioned by Marcella. The old man was older than she had thought, and had long been breaking up. He was dying now as fast as he could of rapid disease of the heart.

Days passed over, and Marcella, completely devoted to the task of soothing his last hours, thought of nothing, remembered nothing but the fast-fleeting presence of this affectionate father, the only and tender, if rugged companion of her childhood and youth, the one creature to whom she really belonged in the world. No message came from Mrs. O'Kelly, and Marcella was obliged to the kindness of her poor neighbors for such little assistance as she could not do without. At last the supreme moment came, and he expired in her arms, blessing her.

And the desolate girl, having followed him to the grave, sat in the dreary old house, dismayed and alone.

CHAPTER VIII.

OUT OF THE DEPTHS.

Sitting forlorn in the old house, alone in the world, Marcella looked back amazed over the events of the last few months of her life, and felt as if all living was a dream, and nothing real which humanity can touch or behold. Up to the night when she had sheltered and protected the stranger whom she now knew as Bryan Kilmorey, her existence had in its hard monotony been real enough, but the many strange vicissitudes through which she had passed since then, looked now to her memory like the flying phantasmagoria of clouds over the head. The stern fact remained that her father was gone, and that she could have neither care for, nor protection from him more in this world.

She returned at once to her old life of sewing from morning till night to keep body and soul together, and as she stitched in solitude her thoughts often went back to Mrs. O'Kelly, and she wondered with a sore heart why rich people were so whimsical and strange, so kind one moment, so cruel the next. She had believed that Mrs. O'Kelly had loved her, and yet she had allowed her to face her terrible sorrow alone, to struggle with poverty at such a moment, to nurse her sick and bury her dead without help or sympathy from a friend. What a little part of the generosity that had dressed her so finely, amused her, taken her about the world during those unreal weeks, would have sufficed to have eased and soothed the suffering of the last ten days! It would have been better she had never known her, thought Marcella, in tears; better she had stayed by her father during those last weeks of his life; more wholesome for herself if she had never tasted the sweets of refined living and of gentle company. The only good she had gained, thought the girl, as she plied her needle with tear-dimmed eyes, was that she had been allowed to see her hero again, had heard something of his life, had learned his name, and had been honored by the clasp of his hand. It seemed to her now, looking back on that enchanted season of enjoyment,

that this wonderful episode in her life had been permitted to her solely for the sake of that one half-hour's conversation with Bryan Kilmorey at the ball.

Why such a strange conviction should cling to her she did not know, only she felt inexplicably that she would yet have some further means of serving him, that she was to have something more to do with him, or for him, before she died. She was too young to know the folly of relying on presentiments, though presentiments do sometimes come true.

She was startled out of her long retrospect by the sound of an approaching foot on the stair, followed by a summons on her door. Rising quickly to open, she almost expected to see Kilmorey again on the threshold, come to tell her what further she could do for him. But it was not Kilmorey who stood before her expectant eyes, only meek old Father Daly from Distresna.

Marcella had never beheld him before, but seeing that he was a priest, she, as a matter of course, invited him to enter and sit down.

He laid his hat on the corner of the old loom, looked at her kindly and critically for a moment, and then extending his blunt, honest, feeling old hand (for hands express as much as voices), said,

"Shake hands with me, my dear. There is no one to introduce us; but as you and I are bound to have much to do with each other through life, we will begin to be friends at once, if you have no objection."

Marcella thought for an instant that the strange priest's mind was a little astray, or that he had mistaken her for some one else. But he soon corrected that impression.

"Your name is Marcella Grace," he said, "and you have lately suffered a great loss. Nay, my dear, God wipes the tears from all eyes; and sure I am you have already wept more than is good for you. Now, how am I to talk to you if you go on crying this way?"

Marcella, whose flesh was weak from scant food and sleep, but whose spirit was willing, righted herself at once and asked what her visitor wanted of her.

"Sit down, my dear child, and listen to me, for I have a good deal to say. Some time ago you had intercourse with a lady, a cousin of your mother's—Mrs. O'Kelly, my friend, my poor friend—God be merciful to her!"

"Sir, you do not mean—"

"That she also is dead? But I do, my dear. Heaven has strange ways of dealing with us, and sometimes troubles come oddly in bunches. 'It never rains but it pours,' says the old proverb; but after God's rain there is always some harvest for the soul. Now, my dear, I will allow you to cry for five minutes, but you must not be longer, for I have a great deal to say and to do. My poor old friend had a true affection for you. She told me to tell you she was sorry she had been hasty with you. She died with sorrow in her heart for your trouble, but she did what she could to make amends, so she did."

"And I have been thinking her changeable and unkind," said Marcella, trying to control her grief. "But what—how—"

"I will tell you all about it. Some time ago we had a bit of a misunderstanding, my poor friend and I, about rents down in the country, and about making her will, and because I was displeased about one I would give her no advice about the other, God forgive me! and I went away in a huff—"

Here Father Daly paused and remembered the old lady's angry cry, "Don't come back here until I send for you!" but he said nothing of that.

"About a fortnight ago," he went on, "I got a telegram in the country asking me to come in a hurry to comfort my poor old friend. She had had a stroke of paralysis, and she had only a few conscious hours before she died. Fortunately, and thanks be to God, she was able to make use of her time."

Marcella listened in silence. All this conveyed to her but one thought. Her good friend had died without receiving the grateful thanks which were her due, and meanwhile the recipient of her bounty had thought of her with a reproachful heart. How can such piteous misunderstandings ever be put straight when death and eternity have interposed between soul and soul?

"She told me about you, my dear, and how strangely you had come across her, as if Providence had sent you. She owned she was wrong in being displeased at you for hurrying away to your father, and she would have followed you next day only 'twas then the hand of God was laid on her. Poor soul! she blamed herself right and left, as we all will have to do *then*, my dear, and may as well begin now. And the end of it was she left you her love; and along with it she has bequeathed you all she was possessed of in the world."

"I prize the message dearly," said Marcella; "it puts me right again. I thought I had lost a friend, and now I have gained one again, though so far away as heaven. Thank you with all my heart, father, for coming to bring me that word."

Father Daly looked at her inquiringly.

"I don't think I have made you understand me," he said. "You are now Mrs. O'Kelly's heiress, my child, with houses and lands, and an income of two or three thousand a year."

Marcella colored, and threw back her head, and looked at Father Daly with a puzzled expression,

"Have I heard you rightly?" she said, in a low voice. "Do you not make some strange mistake? Oh, sir, don't you see that it is so very, very unlikely?"

"Nothing is so likely to happen as the unexpected," said Father Daly, buttoning his coat, "and this is not so unlikely, after all. You are her nearest of kin, in the first place, and she was very fond of you in the second. At all events, I can assure you that there is no kind of mistake. And now about practical business. You can laugh, and cry, and wonder about it all when you have time, but in the mean time you must have somebody to listen to you. It will not suit you

to continue longer in this house, my dear, than is absolutely necessary. I have thought about all that, and I have made some arrangements. As the Lady of Distresna you must have proper surroundings at once, and there is no use in taking the world into our confidence unnecessarily as to where you have hitherto had your home. In all humility we must always remember it ourselves; but it was Mrs. O'Kelly's wish that nothing should be said to take from under your feet the little platform of worldly respectability on which she had been at pains to set you up. Not that you must ever deny the truth, but the world has no claim on our voluntary confidence.

"This being so," continued Father Daly, brushing his hat with his coat-sleeve, and looking at the crown of it intently, so that he might not intrude upon Marcella's natural emotions at such a moment, "I have taken some steps for your comfort. Here is money which you will want to wind up your affairs—your own money, mind; nobody else's—and if you are ready to leave this to-morrow, I will take you to a place where, I will answer for it, you will soon not be sorry to have gone. Some clothes, and all that, can be sent after you."

"Where?" asked Marcella.

"Well, I am going to take you to a friend of mine in the country for the present. I thought you would not care to go to Merrion Square just now, and Crane's Castle would give you but a cold welcome unless it got longer notice. With Mrs. Kilmorey you will be happy and safe until such other arrangements as you please can be made for you."

"Mrs. Kilmorey!" murmured Marcella, again with the feeling that she could not have rightly heard or understood.

"She is a dear friend of mine, and she was a friend of Mrs. O'Kelly till—well, the world parted them. She lives in a very retired spot and is an invalid, and a great deal alone, as her only son is necessarily much away from her. I wrote to her in haste, telling her the state of the case, and this morning I received her reply. She will expect us to arrive to-morrow evening."

Having given her a few more detailed instructions, Father Daly went away and left Mrs. O'Kelly's heiress to realize this newest and most extraordinary of all the changes in her life.

Her friend as well as her father gone from this world, and in their place fortune, ladyhood, position in life allotted to her.

Her first impulse when alone was to fall upon her knees and wrestle with the great wonder, and the strange alternations of pain and joy that now, after her first bewilderment had passed away, seized and shook her. With her hands clasped above her head she remained long in the attitude of supplication, without power to put her thoughts into words, hardly knowing what she asked to receive, or to be saved from, only keenly conscious that God was aware of it all, and would overshadow her with the wings of his care. Then rising to her feet, and standing in the middle of the familiar room, she looked round on the poverty-stricken hearth, the old loom, the rotting timbers, and said to herself that all this evidence of her former life was passing away from her, and after to-morrow would be

seen no more. Only this morning she had feared that she would never be able to escape from its sordid, haunted forlornness to cleaner and less dreary, even if almost as poor, surroundings, and now it seemed to her she could not leave it without a pang. The old crazy sticks and stained walls were all that remained to connect her with whatever love she had known in her life, and in leaving them forever she seemed to cut herself adrift from those she had forever lost.

Her experiences till now had inclined her to fear rather than to hope, and yet as her thoughts, after an interval of sorrowful looking back, sprang on to to-morrow, the eagerness of youth leaped up in her, and she smiled radiantly through her tears. It was true, as that she held what seemed to her a small dowry of golden sovereigns in her hand, that she was henceforth to have money, freedom, nice living, gentle and genial companionship, power to relieve those who suffered still as she herself was now to suffer no more. She was to go forth into a beautiful world, with flowers on her breast and a golden wand in her hand—and then her wide vision of the splendors and delights of a possible happiness gradually narrowed down to one dazzling point, as she remembered that to-morrow she was—strange to tell, and hard to realize—to be a guest in Bryan Kilmorey's mother's home.

With the impulse of youth to believe unflinchingly in what it has already accepted by instinct as noble, she had never paid the slightest heed to Mrs. O'Kelly's denunciations of this man, preferring to think that he was right, and his former friend in the wrong, having from the first adopted his cause, whatever it might be, as the just one. Mrs. O'Kelly had described his mother as crushed and undermined in health by the wrong-headedness of her son. This Marcella had never believed—but now she would see. Happily she would presently see.

Then she began to make her arrangements for the final break with her past. With characteristic fidelity to what she had undertaken, she finished the piece of sewing on which she had been engaged when interrupted by Father Daly with his wonderful news, and took it to the shop which had employed her. Strange it was to her now, the old familiar counting out of pence into her hand—her hand, which was to have henceforth the spending of sovereigns. Coming out of the shop she gave the price of her tear-stained labor to the first poor-looking creature she met, and passed on hugging the blessing which she had bought with the alms. Next she made some purchases, a few necessary articles for herself, and various little presents for humble friends who had been kind to her in her trouble. She paid her small debts, and said her last good-bys, telling all those poor-looking creatures whom she visited that friends having sent for her, she was leaving Dublin, but giving no clew to her future whereabouts. Nobody was surprised. Marcella had grand relations, and, now that her father was gone, of course they would look after her. The neighbors promised to pray for her, wished her God-speed, and she was gone.

She met Father Daly at the railway-station, and at the ringing of the bell for the train, and the shriek from the engine, the curtain finally fell on the early struggles of Marcella Grace, to rise again shortly on the joys and tribulations of the heiress of Distresna.

CHAPTER IX.

THE SHADOW OF A CRIME.

Bryan Kilmorey sat in his chambers in Dublin turning over an anonymous letter in his hands, and pondering its contents. It told him that the police were watching him, that he was suspected of complicity in a recent crime, that a strong case was being made out against him, and that he had better fly the country while yet he had time.

"A precious document!" he exclaimed. "I shall not take the slightest notice of it;" and then, tearing it into shreds, he walked to the window and stood looking out, without seeing the things at which he gazed.

His thoughts were busy with the events of that night when he had fled through the streets of the Liberties of Dublin like a criminal from justice. The horror of the scene he had escaped from lay in dismal colors before the eye of his mind. A fellow-creature whose steps had been dogged from street to street, done to death without a moment's warning, a man whose hand he had often touched, the sound of whose voice he knew, lying on the pavement in his blood while his murderers escaped. He heard the cry of the police and their footsteps following, as, overwhelmed with dismay at his position, he, Bryan Kilmorey, did what he had never done before in his life—ran from pursuit, and sought for a hiding-place and sanctuary. His brow burned as he remembered all that had occurred, and then, having mastered a sort of silent passion of shame and regret, he turned abruptly from the window, took up his hat, and left the house, as if he would escape from his painful thoughts by movement through the open air.

Passing across Merrion Square, he looked up at a house from which he had only a few days ago followed the funeral of an old friend, one whom he had always looked on as a friend in spite of the sharp reproaches with which she had of late kept him in mind that she held him in disgrace on account of his politics. And what were those politics which so dishonored him? he asked himself. He believed that Ireland might be made, and ought to be made, by her own exertions, a peaceful and contented country; that education should be encouraged in, and famine should be banished from the land. That was about the whole in a nutshell. Probably his friend, an emigrant now herself to that new world where no rents are paid and unbought leases are held in perpetuity, was wiser this moment

than she had been a month ago, and would willingly exonerate him from much with which she had not scrupled to charge him. How quickly she had taken her departure, poor old lady, and what had become of that strangely interesting girl, the young relative who had appeared under her chaperonage just before her death? As this girl's face and voice came back to him, he remembered that it was not only her own peculiar attractions which had so fascinated him, but also her curious resemblance to that other girl who was so associated with his adventure on one fatal night, the events of which had just now been so present to his mind, and to which his thoughts still so easily went back.

The sordid aspect of the rooms, the poor garb of his protectress herself came before him again, and he reproached himself for not having tried to do something to better the condition of those under whose roof he had been sheltered from a real misfortune. True, there might be some danger to him in returning to the spot, in at all connecting himself with the people, whoever they might be, who lived in that house. If he were in reality watched by the police, as he had been informed, it might tell against him were he observed to hold any intercourse with those who had harbored him, who might be suspected of having screened him from justice on that occasion. Yet in a matter of this kind it were cowardice to be over-prudent. He had already discovered that the owner of the house was a weaver of poplin, poor and old; might he not benefit him a little if only by buying his manufacture?

The man he had never seen; the girl, he was assured, would keep his secret. He felt a sudden and strong desire to do something at once towards discharging his debt. In these troubled times a man like him could not be sure of the circumstances in which he might find himself to-morrow. Better to do at once whatever seemed urgent to be done. Under the influence of this impulse he directed his steps towards the Liberties, and took his way through some of the most historic parts of Dublin. Here, along these quays where the westering sun turns even the mud of the Liffey into liquid gold, makes the dome of the Four Courts redden in the clouds, and fires the spars of such shipping as clusters between the shadowed spans of the bridges, ran the "rebels" of '98, with caps of pitch ablaze on their heads, to plunge madly into the waters for an ending of their torment. About this spot were enacted the last pathetic scenes in the short life of the enthusiastic boy Robert Emmet. Along this route he strode, sword in hand, leading on the ragged regiment which was all that appeared in the flesh of the imaginary armies with which he had expected to win Ireland for the Irish; and there his gibbet stood, the scaffold from which his heroic young soul escaped to where there are neither famines, nor oppressions, nor possible mistakes or miscalculations for the ardent and freedom-loving spirit to fall into. In yonder house Lord Edward Fitzgerald was trapped, wounded, and caught, to be dragged to Kilmainham prison to die of his wounds. On this street-way Lord Kilwarden met the untimely fate that broke Emmet's heart. And so on through many a thoroughfare till the

causeways grew narrower and dirtier, till "Patrick's" lowered above the pedestrian's head, and the big bell boomed the hour over squalid houses and unwholesome alleys. Time was when the passer-by might have turned into the great cathedral to say a prayer for the living and the dead; but living and dead may now lack a neighbor's suffrage long ere Patrick's threshold can be crossed thus unceremoniously by a knee that would bend and a soul that would pray. And this way lies Weaver's Square.

Kilmorey glanced keenly around him as he entered it. Yes, that was the house, that large one at the end of the street. It looked dark, desolate, deserted. Could it be possible that any one lived within those walls? He spoke to a boy who was passing, and asked for information of the inhabitants of that particular house.

"There's nobody in it now, sir. The ould man is dead, sir; and his daughter's gone away. The people do say, sir, that she's gone away clane out of Dublin to her friends."

"Dead! gone! Gone to her friends. I hope she has friends. I trust she has real friends," was Kilmorey's thought; and then he reproached himself for not having sooner made an effort to know something about her. Prudence told him, however, that things were better as they were. The less the girl knew of the man she had rescued, the safer, perhaps, for him. Let all good angels guard her in that spot of earth, wherever it might be, whither the exigencies of fate had driven her, with that shadow of habitual endurance on her earnest brow, and light of ready pity in her tender and sympathetic eyes. As he turned away from the street, the thoughts sprung from his interest in the girl, as an individual, gave place again to others which touched on the question of his own personal safety.

"Should any one have watched me into the house," he thought, "and with such testimony be ready to help to establish a possible case against me, what would be the effect in the matter of the girl's sudden disappearance? Is there not a likelihood that I should be suspected of removing her?"

And as he walked on, his mind ran on the curious tricks of fate, to speak in worldly phrase, the strange dives and twists that circumstances will make at times, as if precisely for the purpose of forcing white to look black, and black to look white. Unfortunately we are not always in the mood to see in these the arrangements of Providence, able to round the crooked zigzags of our way into fair curves and beautify barren wastes of travel to our sore feet. And it seemed to him now, that if, out of the very threads he had himself spun, of loyal purpose, a net was being woven around him to his destruction, then the consequences of the freaks of accidental circumstance would certainly be hard upon him.

CHAPTER X.

HOMEWARD.

KILMOREY had just returned from London, where he had gone to try to stir up a little interest among members of Parliament on the subject of the Purchase Clauses of the Land Act, which were in such a state that all sale was blocked while some of his tenants were eager to buy what he would be as well pleased to sell. Finding even greater difficulty than he anticipated, he had returned sooner than he intended, and so had probably crossed in the Channel his letters from home, which as yet had not followed him here. The result of this morning's reflections, suggested by the receipt of that anonymous letter which, contemptible as he held it, yet had left its sting behind it, as such things do, was, that he made up his mind to run down into the country at once, see his mother, and arrange his affairs with a view to a possible surprise. In these days there was no knowing when a man might be lifted out of the midst of his affairs, at any amount of inconvenience to himself and others dependent on him, to be practically annihilated at a moment's notice, and for an indefinite length of time. He was ready to acknowledge that this might be all very well if the individual so lifted were a mischievous individual; but he did not think that he, Kilmorey, would, in the event of his being so pounced upon and done away with, prove to be the right man in the right place.

The next morning he took the train as far as the train would carry him westward in the direction in which he wanted to go, and about the middle of the summer day, mounted on horseback, to travel the fifty miles which still separated him from his little Connaught kingdom.

Whoever knows Ireland well knows the beauty of the land through which he passed, while the sun traversed the wide horizon from east to west over his head, taking the light from the lakes and giving it to the hills, stealing the colors from the mountain-tops to spread them across the moor, and ever reversing the picture again as the breeze stirred and the clouds shifted. The beauty of this island of ours is the beauty of light and color in incessant change. The valley has walls dark and blue as sapphire, and is itself a reservoir of iridescent glory, but while we look, the walls have become pure gold, and the hollow land between has mysteriously yawned, deepened, and been flooded with gloom. The elfish mists that sit on the purple peaks and wind themselves about the gray crags descend, before we have time to determine their shapes, to lie along the edge of the dark pool, and creep among the flickering reeds, and transform the

wide brown lines of the monotonous bog into the paths of a shimmering supernatural dominion. We have one moment a royal richness of ambers, purples, crimsons, and golds of every variety of lustre, all spread at our feet like Aladdin's treasures, and the next we are swathed in a winding-sheet of grewsome gray, and move through a world, poor, cold, wind-swept, and rain-beaten. Even in the unbroken weather of a summer day, our aerial changes are so swift and ceaseless that the land we move through seems alive with motion; what was quite near is suddenly far away, and what was distant comes as rapidly smiling towards us. So much of our landscape is made up of lakes, rivers, bays, linked together by wet, verdant vegetation, and so constantly does each moss-girdled lakelet, pool with torn fringes, and strip of widening and narrowing stream, snatch at the clouds above and hold a piece of the blue sky forever in its breast, that half our earth is literally heaven, and we often seem to walk through a sort of mid-air region, with moonrise and sunset, not only over our heads but under our feet.

No wonder, if in a country so overridden by freakish mists and deceiving waters, so eternally the highway for processional splendors of shifting color, so hopelessly the grim sport of funereal clouds and shadows, we encounter at every turn wraiths and fairies, ghosts and elves, that peer at us out of the lakes and the caves, and come down to us from the hollow places of the mountains.

Natural enough, if we see them sitting on the edge of the pool when the blue shadows of dusk are beginning to turn brown, or hear their bells ringing for evening as the sun goes down in fire behind the thorn-trees, or meet them veiled and pensive, gliding across the lapwing's track on the dun moor, or descry the spears of their lances glinting under the moon at the back of the river-side thicket.

Small blame to us if we suspect them of creeping through the key-holes to sit on our hearths while we are asleep, or waken early to hear the horns of the elfin hunt blowing, echoing thinly over the dawn-impurpled crests of the hills!

Bryan Kilmorey loved every huge bowlder that hung out of the mountain over the path he travelled, every diamond-like splash of water that blinked at him as he passed by bog and over moor, every forlorn tree that seemed to mourn a defunct forest at some desolate angle of the high-road. The whole company of elves and fairies were as well known and as dear to him as the flag-lilies in the river, the fluttering pennons of the reeds, and the grotesque shapes of the bog-wood just unearthed out of the reeking peat-moss.

Sometimes, as he had poked about in the gloaming at home, while the plover wailed and the bat flapped across his eyes, and it seemed quite rational to expect to see some rarefied creature with a certain semblance to humanity step out of the clefts in the rock, or from under the screen of the waving bracken, he had told himself that if Irish waste lands were all drained, and Irish rents were low, the delightful eldritch population of these lovely but famine-breeding wildernesses might arise and emigrate *en masse* to some now weirder region, some spot of earth where mists still exhaled from wet mosses

growing nothing but brilliant weeds, and their fumes still got into the vision-seeing brains of hungry and languishing humanity.

At the first sprinkling of corn, wine, and oil, no doubt the fairies would mount their phookas and disappear; and though their landlord (for he accounted himself such to those of the tribe who lived in his brackens, or under or over his barren gray rocks) would grieve for the elfin exodus, yet willingly would he unbar the gates of the morn that let those go forth who require no food but the dewdrops, to make way for the footstep of the sower and the reaper, for the hand that would plant the potato where the nightshade had spread, and make two blades of grass to spring where only one had hitherto grown. But at present the parting between landlord and elfin tenant did not seem imminent, for as yet the landscape still reeked with water, and the children of humanity were not fed.

Towards the end of his journey he passed through all the wonders of sunset while threading one picturesque valley after another, crossing gorges in the mountains, and skirting along a glen here and open moorland there. Like a guiltless soul through the ordeal of fire, he passed amid flames that threatened to consume the green vales and melt the mountains to their base. First it was a golden glory which fell from the heavens, blinding bright, and then amber became rose, and rose became crimson red, till the fires behind the darkling mountains burned themselves out, and paler tints came out to cool the burning earth and air.

Just as the cooler purple began to sweeten the atmosphere he rounded a shoulder of steep mountain, and a scene of wild grandeur and beauty greeted his home-coming eyes. There, on a little island, set low in a dark lake, rose the gables and chimneys of his mother's house. He could see the smoke from the hearth where presently he would sit, the boat lying still on the beach in which he was about to cross to the island dwelling. From the farther shore a huge mountain rose, rugged in outline, and so darkly purple in hue as to seem almost black, and against this looming background the gray buildings on the little island gleamed. On the side of the lake by which he was approaching it a range of hills, less stern than the more distant ones, slanted to catch the remnant of sunset light, and as the two lines folded together in the distance beyond, the island appeared to be set in a triangular *cul-de-sac* of water and mountains. On one side, towards which the chief windows of the island house were placed, the protecting mountains swept apart, revealing a magnificent sketch of distant country, moorland dyed every shade of tawny brown and gold, alternating with darker blots of bog and vivid streaks of green, and all shimmering in waves of light away to the uncertain borderland of cloud and mystery in which soared, with their beaked points, delicate crests, and long curved shoulders, the mountains which are known as the Pins or Bens of Connemara.

He threw his horse's bridle over a post of the little gate that guarded the path leading down to the water, and springing into the boat, laid hold of the oars. A bugle lay in the stern, and picking it up he blew a blast that went ringing across the lake, and came back in

a shower of echoes rippling like musical laughter round the margins of the lake.

A few minutes' pulling with the oars brought him near the shore of the island, where he saw a figure standing watching his approach, whose outlines puzzled and surprised him. This was not the tiny form of his invalid mother, who rarely crept from her couch, and could not have come so far from it without help, even to answer her son's bugle-call by meeting him at the landing-place; neither had it the extensive and elderly proportions of the faithful house-keeper who had followed her mistress in her reverses of fortune to this lonely retreat; nor was it as slight and childlike as the little assistant handmaid who made the third female inhabitant of the island. And yet the figure was familiar to Bryan. With extreme astonishment he gazed at it from a distance of about twenty yards, and it seemed to him that he was looking on the girl who had been so much in his thoughts the day before, whom he had been seeking in Weaver's Square, and who had disappeared with his secret in keeping—had left Dublin, and "gone to her friends." There were the very outlines of her figure, with its dark draperies, and that was the attitude in which he remembered her, alert and eager, the head thrown a little backward, the arms hanging by her sides with unconscious grace. As he stared at her she turned slightly, as if she would go away, and doing so, looked exactly as when she had gone before him leading him to the closet. Involuntarily he signed to her to remain, and asking himself by what extraordinary chance he found her here, and what fortune to himself her presence portended, he with a few strokes of the oars pushed home the boat between the rocks under her feet.

Marcella obeyed his signal and held her ground, till, springing up the rocks, he stood by her side.

Then she smiled and held out her hand, and Bryan saw, with a confused sense of having been oddly tricked by his imagination, that it was not his benefactress of the Liberties after all, but poor Mrs. O'Kelly's interesting niece, who had so strangely made herself at home upon his island.

"You are surprised to see me here, Mr. Kilmorey—that is, if you remember me at all. We have met once before, at the Patrick's ball."

"I remember," said Kilmorey, thinking it would be strange if he did not, all things considered. His mind was still occupied with the resemblance between the girl beside him and the girl who had befriended him, and with the curious chance which a second time had brought the one before his eyes while the other was in his thoughts.

"I have lost my friend," continued Marcella, in a low voice, anxious to account at once for her presence, "and Father Daly carried me off in a hurry here, to Mrs. Kilmorey, who was kind enough to take me in till Crane's Castle be ready to receive me. Your mother does not expect you this evening, sir, and it was by accident that I met you on the rock, having heard your music—"

Bryan perceived at once how natural was the situation, after all, and was surprised at nothing but the little word "sir" which had

slipped out upon Marcella, in momentary forgetfulness of the drilling which poor Mrs. O'Kelly had given her. He looked at her with increased interest, as for a moment she became more closely identified in his eyes with the Liberties' girl. However, he laid the little peculiarity of speech to the account of her foreign rearing. Had not her aunt told him she had been educated abroad? He quite forgot now that Miss O'Kelly herself had contradicted that statement.

Marcella, keenly aware of her slip, turned aside her head to hide the blush which a sudden fear that she was betraying herself called to her face. She had a double reason for desiring to hide forever the fact that it was she who had sheltered this gentleman from the pursuit of the police. To her own desire to spare him a possible humiliation, and perhaps a sense of uneasiness at her possession of his secret, was now added the wish of her dead friend that the extreme lowliness of her antecedents might remain unknown to all save Father Daly. The priest had simply said to Mrs. Kilmorey that the girl had lately lost her father, who had been in anything but prosperous circumstances. Through a feeling of delicacy Mrs. Kilmorey had, in condoling with her guest on her bereavement, forborne to speak in any way which would seem to call for more particular explanations; and Marcella hoped the fact that she, now their friend and guest, and their future neighbor, had by accident come to know an unpleasant secret of Kilmorey's life, might forever remain in the obscurity in which circumstance had enabled her so far to bury it.

"Do I understand you to mean that Crane's Castle is for the future to be your home?" asked Bryan, having first expressed his pleasure at finding that his mother had been enjoying Miss O'Kelly's companionship in her lonely retreat.

"Yes. Does it not seem strange? It seems that I have simply stepped into Mrs. O'Kelly's place."

"She has made you her heiress?"

"And I already feel the burden of the responsibility. Father Daly has assured me that you will help me with my people."

Kilmorey looked grave.

"I am not sure that it was fair to you, under the circumstances, to bring you to us," he said, presently. "Of course Father Daly acted for the best from his point of view. But there are many sides to the question. My mother and I have struck out a peculiar line of conduct for ourselves in these troubled times, and have thereby incurred the censure of our own class. Whether we have done much good by our efforts to get on what we have considered the right track remains to be proved by time. Meanwhile we live, as you see us, remote from the world and in a very simple way. And I question much if one so—so fitted to mingle in society as you are, ought to have your lot thrown in with ours while yet you are in perfect ignorance of the possible consequences to yourself of such an accident."

"You mean that Miss Julia O'Flaherty will not care to make an

intimate friend of me. She has been here, and, down on the rocks yonder, gave me a very solemn warning. I shall not grieve much about Miss Julia O'Flaherty."

"There are others of a much better order whose acquaintanceship you might not like to forfeit, and who would naturally feel interested in the heiress of Distresna."

"Lady Villiers Blake and Mrs. De Lacy Ffrench, for instance. Your mother has described to me all the advantages which would result to me from their sympathy and patronage. They have not taken me into their homes, however, when I was friendless and homeless, and with the friends who have done so I will choose to remain."

"They have not had the opportunity. They are motherly women with daughters of their own, and their countenance would be desirable for you out in the world, even if you think you can get on without it here. My mother is incapacitated both physically and by circumstances from ever doing you such service, and you will be singularly lonely in that respect if you persist in identifying yourself with us."

"I have not led such a life as ought to incline me to desire the fashionable world to which these ladies would introduce me. I simply know nothing about them, and Providence has sent me to you. I shall not step out of the path in which Father Daly has, whether fortunately or unfortunately, set my feet. I believe you to be good, I know that you are kind, and I choose to belong to you if you will let me."

Shadows had fallen as they were speaking, all the sunset flames were extinct, and in the solemn purple twilight a few quivering stars had sprung into keen life above the crown of the great mountain overhanging the lake. As Marcella, her face and figure grown less distinct in the dusk, spoke the last words, a look of resolution straightened her curved lips and an expression crossed her smooth brows which again brought his protectress of the Liberties forcibly before Kilmorey, and her words, "If I had not believed you good I would not have acted as I have done," seemed repeated in his ear. It was the gathering shadows, he supposed, that gave her for the moment that mournful look which had struck him so forcibly in the humbler girl, and which was happily not characteristic of the heiress of Distresna. He had not yet, he told himself, got quite accustomed to the fact of the existence of this strange resemblance, or he would not have started so visibly as now he did, causing Marcella to glance at him inquiringly.

"Nothing," he said. "Only you are so very like—another person whom I have known. I think I told you so the first and last time I met you."

"Yes," said Marcella, controlling her alarm; "likenesses are curious things." She thought of how she must try to be as unlike her old self in manner and speech as possible, and involuntarily withdrew her hand from her breast, where, under her dress, lay the ring that Kilmorey had given her.

And just then the little handmaid from the house came running to tell Mr. Bryan that the mistress had recognized his bugle-call, and was waiting impatiently for his arrival in her room.

CHAPTER XI.

INISHEEN.

THE interior of the home at Inisheen (the little Isle) consisted of a few rooms and passages all on the same floor. The outer walls were of a great thickness, the chimneys stout and low, the windows small and square, the porch strong as a little tower, having two doors, one on each side, to be opened or shut in turn as the wind shifted. Set as it was in the middle of the wind-haunted lake, it had the look of a little fortress, and such it was to the inhabitants when they stood siege in it against the wintry elements. The three or four acres of green turf which surrounded the dwelling and sloped towards the rocks were studded with clumps of low growing trees and bushes, and a thick mat of ivy clung to every wall of the house from base to eaves. All varieties of sea-birds, gulls, puffins, curlews, and wild geese, made their nests in the rocks, or came in long flights from the sea, which, though invisible from Inisheen, was not far away, and their shrill cries and pipings as they swept the lake like trails of mist gave notice when there was a storm at hand.

There were only two living-rooms at Inisheen, and the drawing-room walls were two-thirds lined with books, the shelves for which had been set up by Bryan himself, when stress of circumstance drove him, with his mother, to put into the little island as a harbor. A few eastern rugs on the floor, some material of the same kind draping the short, deep-seated windows, with a pretty supply of foreign ornaments and curiosities, gave elegance and color to the little interior, where fire as well as lamps burned on that summer night as a protection from chills and damps, which, dropping down from the mountains and exhaling from the lake, might be seen any time from dark till dawn floating like wraiths upon the bosom of the waters. A harp stood in one corner of the room, and among the few pictures which the book-shelves had left space for on the walls were an engraving of Robert Emmet, speaking in his own defence upon his trial, and another of the old Irish House of Commons, containing a multitude of small figures, many of which were portraits.

Marcella was sitting at a table, turning over some precious etchings; Mrs. Kilmorey was reclining on her couch, her eyes eagerly following the movements of her son, who walked about the room while the conversation turned on the future treatment of the discontented tenantry of Distresna.

Mrs. Kilmorey was a small, slight woman, looking more like a

withered child than a woman who had matured and grown old. She was all white from head to foot, except for her blue eyes and pink lips. Her hair was snow-white, and dressed prettily on the top of her head, her face was delicately pale, and her gown and shawl were both of some soft white woollen material.

"We are not responsible for bringing her here, Bryan. Mrs. O'Kelly confided her to Father Daly, and Father Daly carried her off here at once to me. We have laid no plot to influence her movements. She is twenty-one years of age, and capable of managing her own affairs. And indeed she has shown aptitude for the business, and some originality in striking out a course for herself. My dear, will you tell Bryan what you have already been about?"

Marcella put aside the etchings, and leaning her elbows on the table, and clasping her hands under her chin, looked towards Bryan with a frank smile. She felt instinctively that he was less likely to identify her with the Liberties girl, so long as she smiled, for she had observed that it was generally when she looked grave or sad that he turned those puzzled inquiring glances on her which conveyed to her keen apprehension that the scene of his introduction to the secret closet was present to his mind. On that eventful night of his concealment Marcella had certainly not smiled at him. A patient courage, an uncomplaining mournfulness had been expressed then by the eyes and lips which were irradiated now with a steady gladness which was by no means assumed. For, still lost as she was in delighted surprise at the change of fortune that had transferred her to this peaceful, refined, and romantic home, and placed her as a centre of interest between her hero and his mother, smiles came to her more naturally than they had ever done before in the course of her short life.

"I have been visiting my people with Father Daly," she said, "not, however, as their landlord, but only as a friend of his. I begged him to let me make their acquaintance first, and try to gain their good-will before announcing myself as the future receiver of their rents."

"A happy thought," said Bryan, watching eagerly all the changes of her animated face. "And how have you found them?"

"I have only visited a few as yet. Father Daly is to come for me to-morrow again. In some of the cabins the people were as sullen and reserved as they looked hungry and poverty-stricken. In other places I thought them too civil. They seemed to distrust a stranger, even though she accompanied Father Daly. But in several cases I think I made my way as a friend. Miss O'Flaherty had told me that unless I gave them presents and made them great promises they would hate me. I gave them nothing and promised them nothing, yet I think I shall be welcome to some of them when I go back again."

"I do not doubt it. The freemasonry of human sympathy is hardly known to Miss Julia O'Flaherty. It is only too well understood by our poor Irish cotters. I am glad you have made so good a beginning, Miss O'Kelly. That you should understand the people

you have to deal with by personal experience, rather than take them for granted through the counsels and representations of others, is just what is most desirable for you. It is better for you to follow neither in my steps nor in Miss O'Flaherty's steps, but to make original footprints of your own. Not every one is capable of doing so. It requires both heart and brains, though most people think all that is needed is a rent-extracting machine. Indeed, so strained and warped from the true uses have the relations between landlord and tenant become, that even at the best a landlord's is hardly a desirable position. For my own part I have gradually withdrawn from it till I find myself now as little of a landlord as possible on the acres my forefathers owned; and for this I may thank my forefathers themselves, who, as some irreverent wag said the other day, sold my birthright for a mess of *poteen*, and, figuratively speaking, gave their souls for a fox-hunt. Not that I am an enemy of the hunt; on the contrary; but there are more ways than one of breaking a man's neck by means of the sport. I will show you to-morrow, Miss O'Kelly, if you and Father Daly will give me a seat on his car when you are going your rounds, the house in which your humble servant was born; once a jovial house, an open house, a reckless, rack-renting house as any in old Ireland. The roof is now falling in, and the chimneys extend their cold arms to heaven as if crying out against the ruin that has descended upon it. Only that I had a mother—well, you will know my mother by-and-by—who preferred a straight conscience and simple living to ancestral halls and all that kind of thing, I should this moment be patching at that family roof-tree, and sending the smoke of unholy feasts up those gaping chimneys. As it is, we have slackened rein on the necks of our tenantry, and in many instances given them the bit in their own teeth. We have here, in this island sanctuary, set up our few remaining household gods; and as in our case it was not too late to mend, we have enjoyed infinite peace since we ceased to hold up our heads among the great ones of the earth. Our plan has worked well, I think, though I do not pretend that in trying to do what is best for my people, I have succeeded in satisfying them all. In every community there is more or less of a sinister element which blows like a contrary wind against the prow of all well-meaning efforts. However, I have been content to struggle on in the teeth of such difficulty, remembering how the demon was first evoked in this country, and knowing how hard it is to lay a demon, once he has been evoked. Remembering, too, how early in life I myself was misled with too much ardor, and cherished a delusion, and had almost descended—"

"We will not speak of that," said Mrs. Kilmorey, with a swift motion of her hand.

"No, we will not speak of that," said Bryan. "I already owe Miss O'Kelly an apology for my egoism. My only excuse is that I have been led into it through my anxiety for her in her present position. She is placed as I was somewhat, and is called on to act. I hope she will neither have to run the risks I have run, nor miss her

opportunity of doing whatever good she may. I feel that she ought to have the benefit of every one's experience."

"I have already had several varieties," said Marcella. "First, poor Mrs. O'Kelly instructed me carefully from her point of view, next Miss O'Flaherty gave me a great deal of information, as did also Mr. O'Flaherty during the day I spent at Mount Ramshackle. From Mrs. Kilmorey I have heard a great deal that has placed my difficulties plainly before me; and now, Mr. Kilmorey—"

Bryan wondered why she smiled at him so incessantly while she spoke, and in the fascination of her smile he now almost forgot the subject of her speech. He did not know that it was to guard his secret, or rather her own secret knowledge of his secret, that she smiled, dazzling his eyes with bright glances so that he might not see behind such glamour the melancholy Marcella of the Liberties.

"She must be happy here," he thought. "She must be feeling happy with us. Would to God she could always stay!" and then, almost shocked at the vehemence of this wish, which was a revelation to himself, he answered, quickly,

"I hope you will use all these experiences only as so many lamps to guide your way. I have no doubt your own womanly instinct will find you a path for yourself which nobody has trod before you."

But after they had separated for the night, and all the lights were out in the house, he walked down on the rocks where there was always a murmur of music at night, a faint, sweet clashing of sounds in the air even when storms were still, a mingling of splashing water, whispering reeds, and the cries echoed from shore to shore of wild birds among the rocks or riding late on the circling waves that girdle Inisheen. And as he went he thought,

"An impoverished man, one perhaps fatally marked by misfortune, to think of taking possession of the future of a creature so full of life and freshness and promise? No, I must not dare to dream of her."

Marcella meanwhile followed him with her thought, and asked herself what was that evil from which he had with difficulty been saved, of which his mother would not suffer him to speak? And holding fast the ring she wore round her neck, she fell asleep.

CHAPTER XII.

DISTRESNA.

He who has never ridden on an Irish jaunting-car—a tidy little car with good springs and cushions, drawn by a fast trotting horse—has not travelled so along Irish hilly roads or through Irish green boreens, has missed one of the pleasantest sensations in life. No other vehicle mounts the rugged hill so boldly and easily, and rattles down again so joyously into the hollow of the capricious highway

or by-way. No other vehicle affords such easy opportunity for friendly chat between two travellers who sit well back on either seat of the car, leaning towards each other with each an elbow on the "well" cushion. But it is almost as difficult to those not to the manner born to sit a jaunting-car as to sit a horse. A certain almost unconscious grasp with the knee and poise of one foot is necessary to give the rider that birdlike sensation of skimming through the air at will which is so utterly unknown to people who drive in carriages.

Father Daly, Bryan, and Marcella, all being to the manner born, pursued their way through the hills as lightly as the breeze blew, till, at a turn of a road, a poor woman suddenly appeared, and courtesying in the middle of the path, requested Father Daly to come with her on a sick call.

"Well, and who is ill now?"

"Och, yer riverence, it's the ould man himsel'."

"Are you sure he hasn't got the toothache, like the last time I went and found him bravely?"

"Oh, sorra fear, yer riverence, but he's bad this time. It's convulted altogether he is, an' not expected since six this morning."

"Overeat himself, I suppose," said Father Daly, in a tone that gave a pathetic meaning to the seemingly heartless words.

"That's about it, Father Daly," said the woman, understanding.

"I believe he's ready for the road, so. Poor Barney was always a good warrant to love God Almighty," said the priest, solemnly, using the idiom of the people the better to make himself understood.

"Thrue for you, Father Daly, but ye see the terrible state of the politics has druv his prayers a bit out of his mind, an' he's off his religion this while back. An' though I don't mane rightly to say he doesn't love God, still he doesn't pay high encomiums to him the way he used to do, yer riverence, an' he doesn't insinuate afther him."

"Well, well, I'll go and talk to him a bit, and we'll make that all right again," said Father Daly.

"I'm going off here to a place up the mountain where the people live chiefly on air, and sometimes it disagrees with them," he added, to Marcella. "Sometimes it disagrees with them," he repeated—muttering to himself, as he slid gently down from the car, being no longer of an age to jump off.

"Do you mean that it is a case of starvation?" asked Marcella, eagerly. She knew enough of the pains of want to be quick at guessing what was meant.

"Something of that, something of that. What I would call the slow hunger if I were a doctor and could invent a new disease—not a new one, either, but one that belongs to Ireland, as cholera belongs to the East. There, now, that will do," as Marcella took a little basket from the well of the car and handed it promptly to the woman. "And now, Bryan, my boy, take the reins yourself and finish the drive, and you can call for me at the Windy Gap when you're jogging homeward. If I'm there an hour too soon it does not mat-

ter. Sure I've my breviary in my pocket, and I couldn't read my office in the middle of finer scenery."

The priest and the woman having set off up a foot-path slanting along the face of the overhanging hill, Kilmorey and Marcella continued their journey together.

In spite of his self-warning of the night before, Bryan felt a keen delight in the chance that had given Marcella to his sole keeping for several hours. As they spun along the level roads, or walked slowly up the steep hills, the thoughtful look on his face relaxed, and his eyes shone. They two were alone in the brilliant weather, among the blue mountains, breathing the freshest, most exhilarating breezes of heaven, and he found the solitary companionship surpassingly sweet. Nothing draws two spirits, if they are already sympathetic, more closely together than to be placed side by side in some impressive solitude of Nature, where under her spell all that is noblest and best in one heart rushes to meet what corresponds with it in the other. Dropping his well-grounded presentiments of coming misfortune behind him like a mantle that impeded his course, Kilmorey went forward through the sunshine with something of the feelings one would give to a soul newly and unexpectedly arrived in Paradise. As wild, subtle, and penetrating as the odor of the mountain heather on the wind that filled his nostrils was this new influence which overmastered his melancholy humor with its potent delight. Yet so strong was his habit of reserve and self-control that the only sign of the new joy awakened within him lay in the swift changes in his eyes and on his mouth as he flicked with his whip and looked up the impurpled bluffs and braes, and away into the infinite glories of sky and highland ahead, thrillingly conscious of the nearness of the fair face half turned to him from the other side of the car, yet only allowing himself an occasional glance at it. At last on the top of a hill he stopped the car, and said,

"Now, Miss O'Kelly, if you will stand up for a few minutes, I will show you the lie of this side of Distresna with regard to the lands near it—my own and Mr. O'Flaherty's. I say my own, for though almost all that we can descry from here has passed from my hands into those of peasant proprietors, it is the most precious of all my possessions—I look on it as the very apple of my eye. I am watching with I cannot tell what eagerness to see how the scheme will work."

"Up to the present how has it worked?" asked Marcella, who stood on the foot-board of the car, holding the rail with one hand, and with the other shading her eyes from the strong sunlight as she gazed down into the variegated valley in the direction indicated by Bryan with his whip.

"Look through this," he said, giving her a field-glass, "and your own eyes will suggest the answer. To this side, where you see white walls and new thatches, and here and there the absence of offensive heaps by the door, and the beginning of general neatness about, there are some of my small peasant proprietors. Over yonder, where you see smoke coming out of the hill-side through an old

broken basket—that is Distresna, and you will find many of your tenants burrowing thus in the earth like moles."

"Why?"

"Because, they will tell you (that is, if they have courage to speak) that the traditions of the country, and all the experiences of those who within their own memory have made the trial, go to prove that any one who makes a show of decency and neatness in his dwelling has his rent raised without fail, before he has had time to reap any benefit himself from his own improvements, and only that he may be forced to clear out and make room for a richer tenant."

"But you had not—you would not have treated them so!"

"I am sorry to say that in my father's time it was done, and they naturally expected me to act like others of my family and class. I found them quite unbelieving and unmanageable on the old lines. On the new ones—well, already the best of them look on me as their friend."

"And yet, does it not seem a pity to let the old relations of landlord and tenant quite die out?" said Marcella. "It seems to me such a good relation if every one did his duty."

"With an 'if' what cannot man do? Take the universe to pieces and rebuild it again," said Kilmorey. "Unfortunately men with power too often think more of doing their will than their duty, and in world-forgotten places like this every owner of a few hundred acres has been accustomed to look upon himself as a sultan. As for myself I thought the matter out and put it thus: many men have probably had as generous thoughts in the beginning of their career as those that come to me. How do I know that later in life I shall not have become so attached to some form of selfishness or other, which will show me things in a different light from that in which I see them now? I will put it out of my own power to be a persecutor of my fellow-men, even with the most plausible reasoning on my side. I confess that a hereditary liking for the position of landlord has stood in my way, and, even now, if I can possibly save the mastership of the remnant of my property, I feel that I will do it. But not unless I can by this means effect as much improvement as by the other. I will have no slaves living under my rule."

Marcella did not reply. In her heart she leaned to the side of landlordism. It seemed to her that it ought to be so easy for the rich and powerful to take care of the ignorant and poor. She, herself, in her consciousness of a state of general ignorance which she innocently thought must be very peculiar for one in her position as a lady, felt ever inclined to turn to those above her in education and rearing for example and guidance. She was aware, too, that her exceptional experience of the tribulations of the poor ought to give her (when educated, as she now hoped to be), a particular advantage in the efforts she might make to raise the condition of those over whom she had been so strangely and wonderfully placed. She felt a strong desire to try her own powers of working good before throwing the reins out of her hands that had as yet hardly grasped them.

"You do not advise me to follow your example, to turn my tenants at once into peasant proprietors?"

"I advise you to do nothing till you shall see further for yourself. For one thing, many of your people are incapable of becoming proprietors until the present state of the law of purchase is amended. You would have to lend money, a certain proportion of the money (to buy your own land), to your purchasing tenant, and afterwards take a mortgage on your own land (yours no longer) as your only security for repayment. In almost all cases this is what I have done, and at the present moment I find it anything but an enriching procedure. In reserving a part of my property, stopping my sales, I act under necessity, as I have no more money to venture, and so feel no scruple about persisting in the rôle of landlord to a certain extent. For the rest, we shall see. Now, Miss O'Kelly, at which of these underground edifices do you wish to pay a visit?"

By this time they were wending up a by-road, so rutty and uneven that they had had to alight and walk, one on either side of the horse's head, while the car jolted over stones and into hollows.

"I want to see a Mrs. Conneely who lives about here. I talked to her on the road the other day and promised to come to see her. Ah, there is the young man who was with her. This must be the place."

A shock head was protruded from the hole under the hill, and a voice said,

"Sure it's the young lady hersel' that's come to us. Me sowl! but I knowed she wasn't wan o' the forgettin' sort!"

At the same time the wail of an infant in pain was heard from the underground cabin.

"Is the baby not better?" asked Marcella of the owner of the shock head, who, having withdrawn it for a few moments, put it forth again.

"Musha, it's in heaven any betterment 'll be that is for it," said the lad, pulling his wild forelock as he stepped out of the hole and invited the lady in. "Only don't for yer life tell that to the mother o't, miss."

Marcella could at first see nothing in the cabin for the smoke, which the basket in the chimney-hole failed to carry successfully aloft, but presently she descried a woman on her knees before a kind of cradle made of a *cleeve* (turf-creel), set upon two long, dry sods of turf, and heard the reiterated word, half a caress and half a moan of agony,

"*Acushla machree! Acushla machree! Acushla machree! machree!*"

Marcella waited for a few moments, and then put her hand on the woman's shoulder. There is as much difference of expression between one light touch and another as between gentle tones of voice. The meaning conveyed by the tips of five fingers may be cruel or tender, callous and cold, or exquisitely sympathetic. Marcella's touch found, without jarring, the chord most susceptible of sympathy in the mother's suffering heart.

"What is the matter with him? What can we do for him?" she

whispered, kneeling beside the poor woman, and stealing an arm round her.

"Och, it's only the hunger, miss—he can't ate the yellow male, an' I've nothing else for him. We haven't had a tint o' milk these three days."

The next minute Marcella was warming some milk that she had brought in the car, and was presenting it to the mother, who, after making an effort to speak, had fallen forward again on the cradle, embracing the little white set form it held with both her lean brown arms.

"I think it is only exhaustion, and this may not be too late," she said. "Let me try;" and gently putting the dazed creature aside, Marcella lifted the child in her arms, and sitting down on a broken stool, began to moisten the infant's lips with the natural nourishment. The pale lips moved and received the fluid, and after a time the eyes opened and seemed to look for more. In a quarter of an hour the child was unmistakably better. Marcella remained yet another half-hour, nursing, feeding, caressing it, while the mother knelt speechless watching her, no more daring to interfere than if it was the Holy Mother herself who had come down out of heaven and taken her child's case out of her hands. The tall lad with the shock head stood by, his great hollow eyes fixed on Marcella, a look of eager appreciation of the scene on his pallid face. Finally, when the child seemed to fall into a natural sleep, Marcella restored him to his mother's arms.

The poor woman pressed the babe convulsively to her breast, as she took the seat from which her visitor rose, and, not attempting to speak her thanks, merely lifted the hem of Marcella's dress and put it to her lips.

"I will leave you this bottle of milk, and to-morrow I shall send more. Mike will come for it, perhaps," said Marcella, looking in the youth's face, as if making a personal request.

Mike's ready, "I will, miss," nearly choked him. He brushed his hand across his eyes, and escorted the lady from the cabin, and then glanced at her with a kind of reverential rapture as she stood on the grass, looking up and down for Kilmorey, who, having witnessed something of the foregoing scene in the cabin, was now making a meditation upon it at a distance, as he fed Father Daly's little fast-trotting horse.

The pig, who had been another witness of the scene within the cabin, now also came forth to see the lady off.

"Why do you not sell *that* rather than be hungry?" asked Marcella of Mike, as the animal stood grunting at her, whether in reproach or thanksgiving who can tell?

"Is it the pig, miss? Sure that's the rint. He's all we have betune oursel's an' the cowld mountain-side. Whin he goes, sure, we'll all have to folly him, barrin' he goes into the lan'lord's pocket."

Marcella smiled broadly at the notion of Mike and the pig in her pocket.

"I am going to buy him from you," she said, "and you can keep

him for me till the landlord wants him. I will give you the price of him to-morrow when you come. Best market price. Honor bright. And, by-the-way, who is your landlord?"

Mike was so struck dumb, not only at this announcement of her intended purchase, but by her peculiar idea of her rights as a purchaser, that he made no answer, only turned crimson up to the roots of his hair.

"Who is the landlord, Mike?" But Mike could not even hear the question, so wildly was the pig still running through his head.

"It's too much, miss," he blurted out at last. "Sure you don't know how much that baste is worth. The half year's rent's inside of him."

"Seven pounds, Mike."

"Oh musha, miss, not so much as that." And then, utterly abashed by such magnificent generosity, he hung his head, while his thoughts whirled riotously in the expectation of coming affluence to the family.

"But you have not told me yet, Mike, who is the landlord."

"Sure she's dead, miss, an' the agent's turned off, and sorra wan owns us this minute, for the new landlord's a lady too, an' we haven't seen her or heard tell of her, an' maybe niver will. But the new agent 'll be down on us for the next gale of rint. An' av coorse he'll be harder than the last one."

"Why should he be harder? And how do you know there will be an agent?"

"Ladies always has agents," said Mike, "and the next agent is always worse than the one before. That's all we know about it yet, miss."

"Well, Mike, we'll march our pig to meet him when he comes, and we needn't be afraid of him for a while, anyway," said Marcella, laughing. "But how have you managed up to this?"

"Ye see, miss, me brother-in-law, that's her husband" (jerking his thumb towards the cabin), "is away in England workin' at the harvest, an' he'll bring a bit o' money home wit him. Meself would ha' been wit him only for the faver I've just riz out of, miss. I'm the last of a long family mesel', an' only for bein' sickly I'd be in Amerikay like the rest o' them that sends a pound now and again to help to stop the gap. Sure only that the weather does go dead again us we'd always have potatoes and turf, and could go abroad to airn the rint. But whin the rain rots the potatoes, and there's no dryin' for the turf, an' the yalla male's that dear—och we'd need to be angels wit wings, and no atin' at all, to get on wit it."

"Now, what do you think, Mike? Would you not be better off if you were away entirely, all of you, to a country where it's easier to get something to eat?"

"Faix, miss, an' maybe we would. Only I'm thinkin' the ould hills would be lonesome witout some of us. An' there's a power o' us gone already, ye see, miss — there's a power o' us gone already."

Mike did not know what a weighty truth he had uttered. Surely

enough the accumulated masses of exiled Irish are proving themselves a terrible power.

The desire to hear the praises of Kilmorey here constrained Marcella to ask a reason for the superior appearance of some of the houses down yonder in the valley,

"Sure that's Mr. Bryan's land, miss, an' isn't he making their own owners of the whole o' them! It's what they call *pisant propriety*, miss; maybe ye have heard of it?"

"He has been good to the people. Do they like him for it?"

Mike lowered his voice. "Sure, miss, they love the ground he walks—barrin' them"—he broke off, and looked around him cautiously—"them that we needn't be mintionin'. There's some that has an ould crow to pluck wit him, an' I'm feared they're on for pluckin' it."

The change in Mike's face was even more remarkable as he spoke his last words than were the words themselves, and as Marcella noted this, her own eyes took such a scared expression that Mike said suddenly, as if a light had dawned on him,

"Maybe he is somethin' to ye, miss. I mane, *maybe he has you bespoke!*"

Though the words were audacious, the anxious delicacy of Mike's manner of saying them forbade all offence. Marcella colored, but said, frankly,

"Mr. Kilmorey is a friend of mine, but that is all. Nobody has me 'bespoke.'"

Mike's countenance brightened. What was it to him, poor lad, what gentleman might have a claim upon the beautiful lady who was as far removed above himself as the stars are above the little bog pools that occasionally reflect them? Yet somehow it pleased poor, gaunt, shock-headed, ragged Mike, that this creature of his sudden worship belonged as yet to no man, had, as he might imagine if he liked, no fixed place among the "ginthry," and could wander at her own sweet will among the mountains, as likely to have come down out of the clouds as to have come up out of the lowlands.

Nevertheless, with the quickness of perception of his race and class, he had read in Marcella's eyes that Kilmorey's safety was dear to her; and he said, as Bryan himself was seen leading the horse and car to meet them,

"Tell him to take care o' himsel', miss, for there's thim that's set to hurt him. Ax him to take a trip to see Amerikay."

There was no time to question him as to the meaning of his ominous words. The next minute Marcella was looking back from her seat on the car at the wild figure of Mike, as he stood gazing with reverential eyes in the direction towards which her face was set, long after he could see it no more.

With a cold shudder she felt that in return for her exertions a thorn had been planted in her heart, and one which it would be hard to eradicate. She felt indignant at Mike for suggesting what could hardly be true. Had not Kilmorey's fault in the eyes of his friends been only too great a sympathy with the disaffected people, and had

it not been made clear to her that any danger threatening him (and, thank God, it was blown over!) had loomed from a quarter directly opposite to that now so strangely indicated? How could she convey such a message to Kilmorey's ear. And yet she must not dare to sleep without communicating it to him. As they moved on, Bryan noticed her changed and dejected looks, and said,

"You must not take the sufferings of these poor people too much to heart. Happily you have the power to alleviate it."

In saying this he was thinking of a power distinct from that which mere money had placed in her hands. But Marcella's thoughts did not follow his words, being quite filled with the idea of his danger, and thinking her tired, he remarked that it was now too late to pay further visits.

"You gave so much time to that baby," he said, "that if we do not now get on quickly, Father Daly will be reading his office in the Windy Gap till it grows too dark to see, even with spectacles."

"But we can easily get home before dark," said Marcella, anxiously; and Kilmorey, wondering at the sudden change in her spirits, urged the horse to a faster trot. As they spun along the road in silence the girl's mind was distracted with doubts and questions. Ought she not to put him on his guard at once, and yet why should she spoil the drive which he was so evidently enjoying, and bring back the cloud of care to his eyes which were shining on her now with a happy tenderness? She hated to be the messenger of evil to him; and, after all, did she not utterly disbelieve in the vague warning which she had got to give him? Of course it must be given. She would not take the risk of withholding it. But there was no need to think of it now, not till these beautiful moments of travel and companionship should be displaced by the inevitable future, and pushed back to the greedy past gaping for them.

Kilmorey, having felt the mountain air grow keener as they ascended the pass leading to the road by which they were to return towards Inisheen, wrapped her in a woollen shawl, and then set himself to beguile her fatigue with stories of the country through which they were passing.

"Over yonder, Miss O'Kelly, is the old home of the Kilmoreys, the house in which I was born. Does it not present a wild spectacle, a striking instance of the thrift of Irish landlords, for you see when that roof-tree began to decay rents were paid, and those who received them ought to have been able to keep the wolf from the door. In that old house what dreams I have dreamed. As a lad I felt that there was something terribly wrong in the existing state of things, and I wanted to redeem Ireland. My mother, as you have discovered, has warm national blood in her veins. Some of her family fled to France long ago and joined the Irish brigades there. Almost all of her people are exiles through political causes in the past, and she, God bless her, fed me on Irish history and poetry, while my father, good easy man, thought of little besides his hunt and his hunt-dinner, and his flowing punch-bowl. The consequence was that I

even went beyond my mother in ardor for the Irish cause, and at seventeen rushed into the arms of the Fenians."

Marcella uttered a little cry of dismay.

Kilmorey smiled. "You needn't be frightened," he said, "I am not a Fenian now. My mother discovered the matter and appealed to my father, and I was sent to Cambridge, and afterwards to travel. In the course of a few years I had learned to think; and though my enthusiasm for Ireland was no way cooled, I saw the folly and wickedness of dreams of war which had not the remotest chance of success. Since then I have turned my attention to the consideration of more rational ways of benefiting my country than those proposed by Fenianism, which, though it began with a bold scheme for war, has, I am sorry to say, degenerated so far as to identify itself with societies for assassination. I shook myself free of it with some trouble and at some risk; but over yonder, Miss O'Kelly, in that romantic little green hollow between two purple hills, is the spot where we used to drill. Convert as I am to sane and peaceful aims, grown old in wisdom and experience, I can yet feel the thrill of an exquisite sense of daring and danger, the strong rapture in the vivid hope of one day marching to battle for Faith and Fatherland, to win a triumph which was to be followed by the blossoming of the wilderness and food in plenty for the famishing. All the heroic patriots of antiquity were my models, and I may well regret the passing of the youthful fervor of spirit that brought me yonder in the silence of a moonlight night, my gun on my shoulder, my heart beating like a martial drum, and my mind fixed on the determination to risk individual destruction for the sake of the future of my race."

Marcella was silent. From all this revelation she had gained a few ideas. In the first place he had really been a Fenian, and in the second place, by renouncing Fenianism he had incurred the enmity of that formidable body. From which side now did his danger proceed, a danger of which he himself was perhaps this moment in ignorance? Was it as a former Fenian, an offender against the law, or as a seceder from the secret society, that he had become a mark for vengeance at unknown hands? His escape from the police on that memorable night seemed to point to the one, and the warning given by Mike implied the other. If a mingling of the two might be imagined—

Here a sharp turn of the road brought them into the Windy Gap, and Father Daly climbed upon the car. Then Marcella made an effort to rally her spirits, and related the experiences of the drive to his reverence.

Father Daly rubbed his hands in delight. "Capital!" he cried, "capital! What will become of the poor creatures with joy when they find whom they have got for their landlord?"

The priest returned with them to Inisheen for the night, and after dinner at his urgent cry for music, Mrs. Kilmorey's harp was carried to the side of her couch, and she sung for the little company.

"Only Bryan and Father Daly would listen to an old woman's song," she said to Marcella; "they have so long been accustomed to

hear me that they will not allow either the voice or the harp-strings to be cracked. As for you, my dear, you will have to try to be patient."

"Give us the 'Wild Geese,'" said Father Daly. "Miss O'Kelly, the song which Mrs. Kilmorey sings for me every time I come here, was translated from the Irish, long ago, by an ancestress of hers, whose lover had to fly the country, and whom she never saw again."

The little white-haired lady, sitting upon her sofa, touched her instrument as if with fairy fingers, and a wild flowing melody that sounded to Marcella's ears like fitful weeping trickled over the harp-strings.

"I had no sail to cross the sea,
A brave white bird went forth from me;
My heart was hid beneath his wing:
O strong white bird, come back in spring!

"I watched the wild geese rise and cry
Across the flaring western sky,
Their winnowing pinions clove the light,
Then vanished, and came down the night.

"I laid me low, my day was done,
I longed not for the morrow's sun,
But closely swathed in swoon of sleep,
Forgot to hope, forgot to weep.

"The moon, through veils of gloomy red,
A warm, yet dusky, radiance shed,
All down our valley's golden stream,
And flushed my slumber with a dream.

"Her mystic torch lit up my brain,
My spirit rose and lived amain,
And followed through the windy spray
That bird upon its watery way.

"*O wild white bird, O wait for me,*
My soul hath wings to fly with thee,
On foam-waves lengthening out afar
We'll ride towards the western star.

"*O'er glimmering plains, through forest gloom,*
To track a wanderer's feet I come,
'Mid lonely swamp, by haunted brake,
I'll pass unfrighted for his sake.

"*Alone, afar, his footsteps roam,*
The stars his roof, the tent his home;
Saw'st thou what way the wild geese flew,
To sunward through the thick night dew?

"*Carry my soul where he abides,*
And pierce the mystery that hides
His presence, and through time and space
Look with mine eyes upon his face.

"*Beside his prairie fire he rests,*
All feathered things are in their nests:
'What strange wild bird is this?' he saith,
'Still fragrant with the ocean's breath.

"'*Perch on my hand, thou briny thing,*
And let me stroke thy shy wet wing;
What message in thy soft eye thrills?
I see again my native hills,

"'*And vale, the river's silver streak,*
The mist upon the blue, blue peak,
The shadows gray, the golden sheaves,
The mossy walls, the russet eaves.

"'*I greet the friends I've loved and lost.*
Do all forget? No, tempest-tost,
That braved for me the ocean's foam,
Some heart remembers me at home.

"'*Ere spring's return I will be there,*
Thou strange sea-fragrant messenger!'
I wake and weep; the moon shines sweet,
O dream too short! O bird too fleet!"

"It is too long for a song," said Mrs. Kilmorey, having finished. "No one but Father Daly would willingly listen to more than three stanzas. The length of 'Silent O Moyle' is the length for a perfect song." And she sung Moore's exquisite melody.

"Delicious!" murmured Father Daly, with a long sigh of enjoyment. "Now, Bryan, where is your fiddle?"

An instrument was produced and handed first to the old man, who played an Irish planxty of Carolan's, mad with fun and frolic. Afterwards the fiddle was passed to Bryan, in whose hands it became the violin—

"That small sweet thing,
Devised in love and fashioned cunningly
Of wood and strings."

Bryan touched it with the skill of an artist, and in a little theme of Beethoven made it give forth the soul of the musician. Marcella, whose nerves were already overstrung, was almost wrought to tears by the divine tenderness of his music. Over and above Beethoven the cry of the Wild Geese was in her heart. "Tell him to go a trip to see Amerikay," said Mike. Was he, too, destined to be a wanderer far from the land he loved so well, or be sacrificed to some cruel alternative? She could not dare to sleep without delivering her warning, and wrote a few words in pencil on a page in her pocket-book, while Mrs. Kilmorey and the priest were talking, and Brian was still playing.

As they separated for the night she put it into his hand unobserved, and, greatly astonished, he held it folded in his palm until he found himself alone.

Having read the few urgent words in Marcella's large, rather unformed handwriting, he looked at first more glad than alarmed, then asked himself was it fancy or conceit that led him to discern an accent of piteous fear for his safety in the imaginary voice in which the written message was delivered. Would she greatly care if he were hurt? If so, it were almost good to be hurt.

He remembered her sudden fit of dejection after quitting Mike, and the suggestion that anxiety for him had caused it, came to him with so much sweetness that it was some time before he could cease to dwell on it and give his attention to the warning itself.

Then, "I am not surprised," he reflected, "but I stand my ground. The danger does not blow from the quarter Mike apprehends. It may be that it were better if it did. But at all events I stand my ground."

Then, studying again the simple words on the scrap of paper in his hand, he forgot the cause of his getting them in the joy of their possession.

CHAPTER XIII.

MARCELLA A LANDLORD.

For some time after this Marcella's hands were full of business. What with taking measures to make Crane's Castle habitable, and continuing her visits to her tenantry in company with Father Daly or Kilmorey, or both, she had little idle time. With a few bold assured words Bryan had almost set her mind at rest on the subject of danger to him, so that she was able to give at least a good part of her thoughts to putting her affairs in order, and laying a foundation for a future happy understanding between her people and herself.

Gradually the poor dwellers on the green spots between the bogs and the barren stretches of mountain came to look for the visits of the smiling lady, who was "that kind, you wouldn't think she was a lady at all," and the pinched, weather-beaten faces would brighten at her approach, and the little brown barelegged children in their scanty garments of crimson homespun flannel would come capering like wild goats along the rocks to meet her. By degrees all the cases of hardship, the evictions and rent-raisings, were laid before her. Sitting at the cabin fire while the old granny in the corner smoked the tobacco the lady had brought, and Marcella herself helped to drink the tea which had been transferred from her own pocket to the little brown teapot on the hearth, she became acquainted with all the ills to which these suffering creatures had been subjected, that her rent-roll might show an increase rather than a falling off in wealth. Since Mrs. O'Kelly, five years ago, had shaken the dust of Distresna off her feet, offended at some complaints that had been made of what she sincerely considered her most benignant rule, and departed from Crane's Castle never to return, the agent

had been gradually screwing up the rents, trying to extract a little more, and a little more money out of bog and rock; and at the same time the seasons had been wet and cruel, turf had not been dried, and potatoes had failed, and a good part of the hard-earned rent, earned in America, England, anywhere, had been spent on the insufficient yellow meal on which the defaulters all but starved. There had been several evictions within the year before Mrs. O'Kelly's death. In some cases the ruined families had disappeared from the country, in others they lived among their neighbors, while a son or daughter had gone as a sort of advanced guard to America to try to earn some money which might get them reinstated in their holdings. A few dwellings better than ordinary, showing signs of improvement at the cost of much labor, were pointed to as warnings to the wise man not to improve. Out of these the rash and adventurous improvers had been cast to repent of their folly, the young in exile, the old in the poor-house.

As Marcella listened and observed, her heart was stirred, and she remembered that she also was a child of the people. If through her mother she was descended from the gentry who had so mismanaged and misruled these poor, through her father she was one with them. The power to alleviate their wants and their miseries had been wonderfully placed in her hands; the will should not be wanting. With unfailing patience she studied their various cases, learned their views, perceived and appreciated their temptations.

With the landlord on the one side, irritating and crushing them, and on the other the secret societies pressing them to put themselves in the hands of a power that declared itself able and willing to right them, was it surprising if the more desperate among them fell blindly into complicity with crime? The only wonder was that the bulk of them kept free from it. Can one be astonished that the Fenian's promise of a warfare that must bring glorious changes over the face of the country, should have enthralled the more sturdy and fearless of the youth, taught them to shoulder a gun, and enticed them to the secret meeting-place in the heart of the moonlit glen? On these things Marcella mused and pondered. If Bryan, as a lad, had been inspired to rush out from his mother's side in his comfortable home, to strive to right the wronged, how much more those whose aged parents or little children were wasting before their eyes in the very grip of the wrong?

Well, she would have no more Fenians, no more slaves, no more starvation, no more eviction. Her rent-roll should be to her but as a calendar of good deeds done. In one spot of Ireland, at least, prosperity as great as the poverty of the land would permit should reign. To Crane's Castle should come all who needed help or comfort. With their babies in her arms, their children about her knees, she would know how to talk to the mothers and fathers.

In the mean time the people were full of anxiety about their new landlord, and Marcella was often questioned as to whether she had heard anything about that person; or, more important still, anything of the appointment of an agent. They had learned that Crane's

Castle was getting cleaned up and put to rights, and this looked as though the agent, if not the lady herself, intended to live on the property.

In all probability, they thought, the rents would be raised, as a first step, by the new management. How many of those who now clung with passion to their hearths and homes, poor and humble as they might be, would, in a few weeks hence, have received the order to go forth! an order which to many was a veritable death-sentence. Marcella could tell them nothing, only begged them to hope. To ask them to be patient was unnecessay. Nowhere in the world is such Christian patience to be met with as in an Irish cabin.

In the mean time Crane's Castle was getting thoroughly swept and garnished. The cobwebs of years were blown away, the mouldy old furniture was polished up, pretty new things arrived from Dublin to make the place more comfortable and habitable than it had ever been before, and at last it was ready for Marcella to take possession. A lady of good family, one of the many Irish ladies whose slender income, being derived from a mortgage on land, has vanished of late years, had accepted the position of companion to the heiress of Distresna, and was ready at any moment to obey a summons to the spot. All things were in proper trim when Marcella unfolded her little plan for the conclusion of the play she had been enacting for the benefit of her people.

On a bright Sunday morning in July it was announced by Father Daly, from the altar in his chapel at Ballydownvalley, that the new landlord, who, as they knew, was a lady, a relative of the late Mrs. O'Kelly, would meet her tenants at Crane's Castle on a certain day in the following week, and would receive their rents in person and hear their complaints, if they had any to make. Now the people upon whom this news fell like a shock had never known Marcella by any other name than Miss Marcella, and had not the faintest suspicion that she was a personage of importance. A moaning murmur from the women at their prayers greeted the announcement, groups stood late in the chapel-yard that day discussing the expected event, and old and young returned to their cabins in the afternoon with a load on their hearts. They had not a doubt among them that the new state of things would be worse than the old, and even Father Daly's silence as to the lady's character and intentions had an ominous meaning for them. If he had been able to say a good word for the new landlord he would surely have done so. All his sermon was about patience and confidence in God; just such a sermon as he had always preached to them when the turf would not dry, and the potatoes failed, or when anybody died of the slow hunger, or was evicted.

On the appointed day they were all in motion on the road to Crane's Castle, that is, all the heads of families, or the member of a family who was to act as spokesman for the rest. Crane's Castle stood about a mile from the lake of Inisheen, with its face to seaward and a mountain at its back, a quaint, ancient building with thick gray walls and small, deep-set windows, and a general look about it

as if the crows had been building in its chimneys ever since they came out of the Ark. In-doors a mighty change was already noticeable, a few richly-colored rugs on the tiles of the great square vault-like hall, and a fire burning on the hearth to consume the damps within and without, gave promise of a cheerful interior. Faded and mildewed carpets and curtains had gone out with the dust accumulated upon them, and the once mouldy and gloomy reception-rooms had been so draped and painted and garnished as to have become places to linger in for comfort and repose. In the drawing-room sat Marcella's chaperon, a majestic and handsome woman, who plied her embroidery-needle with the air of a fallen empress, and never failed to remind all comers that she was "one of the O'Donovans." The last of a dynasty whose subjects had revolted and dethroned her could not have alluded to her misfortunes with more dignified bitterness than did Miss O'Donovan when speaking of the failure of her annuity, which had been drawn from a charge upon land. As her case was indeed a hard one, and there are many of such, she was treated with the utmost tenderness by her friends, and Marcella, in nominally accepting her services, was prepared to accord her all that unhesitating homage to which her pride and her poverty laid urgent and constant claim.

Of the library, where until now "The Peerage," Burke's "Landed Gentry," and innumerable bound volumes of the sporting papers had been the chief ornaments of the shelves, Marcella had chosen to make her own particular sanctum, and here she awaited her tenants on that day in July. All the earliest arrived were invited to take seats in the hall, while the first man was called by name to the presence of the landlord.

They knew that library door too well, having never entered it without fear in their hearts. The first who went in now was quickly aware of a change in the place. There were, as of old, the two high-set narrow windows at the end of the room, but in their recesses and catching the sunshine stood deep-colored jars full of tall yellow flag-lilies, filling the niches with brilliance and light. In the shadow between the russet-tinted curtains a lady was sitting. Her head was bent down, and the heavy-hearted tenant could not see her face. The room was full of flowers, the furniture was the same and yet changed; the poor man gazed round the place with a vague wonder in his mind as to whether the new landlord was as different from the old as this beautiful apartment was the reverse of its former gloomy self. Then he looked again, and saw Marcella smiling at him from the shadows between the golden lilies in the windows.

"You see it is me whom you have got for your landlord, and you must make the best of me. Now state your case, that we may get to business," she said; and Father Daly here appeared rubbing his hands and laughing with delight.

"John Lynch," he said, "confess that you are sold. Go and tell your neighbors what a terrible landlord has come to Distresna."

In a few minutes the room was full of the people pressing round Marcella, begging to touch her hand, pouring out their *cead mille*

failthes and blessings on her head. It was long before the excitement had subsided and business was begun. All that day and many days after the new landlord sat in her place between the yellow lilies, making a picture in the shadowy old room, listening to the cases laid before her, distributing justice, promising help, lowering rents, and granting new leases. After all the business was done her rent-roll was considerably disfigured, but her heart was more at rest. Were not these poor, overjoyed creatures her actual children? Had they not been given bodily into her charge? Had not Providence ordained that enough sustenance should be derived from the land for her and for them also? Should she store up all the grain for herself and leave nothing for them but the husks? Forbid it, righteous God!

Her next step was to invite the tenantry, men, women, and children, all who could come, to a house-warming at Crane's Castle. The great barn and out-houses were cleared for dancing and decorated with heather. Pipers were hired, and a supper was prepared such as the tenants of Distresna had never seen before. Invitations were sent to the gentry also to be present at the people's ball; but few of them were at home, and still fewer cared to come. Already many heads were shaken over Miss O'Kelly's strange beginnings with her tenantry. But what could be expected of her, seeing she had identified herself from the first with those queer half-Fenian Kilmoreys? Yet the dance went on as merrily as though under the patronage of a queen. Marcella danced with her tenants and helped them with her own hands to the good cheer she had prepared for them. The children undertook to teach her the step of the Irish jig, while Father Daly looked on and applauded, and the crowd stood back to watch the performance with delight.

When the step was learned she danced it with Mike, the mountain lad, who had frightened her with his unnecessary warning.

"Mike," she said, when the jig was finished, "that was all a mistake—I mean your fear that there was harm in store for Mr. Kilmorey."

"I hope so, miss—I hope so," said Mike, but his beaming looks of pride and joy at being danced with by "herself" vanished like the sun under a cloud. "All the same, there's people here to-night that I do not like the looks of. There's a party in the hay-loft, and bad scran to the dance they have danced, nothing but chattin' under their breath and dark looks for anybody else that goes near them. One of them's a stranger in these parts, and the others are no credit to them they belong to. But whisht, miss, whisht! Sure we ben't to take notice o' them. It's Mike will keep watch for himsel' and yoursel', an' if danger comes back on the wind, he'll run before everything else with the news of it."

CHAPTER XIV.

THE CALM BEFORE THE STORM.

For about a month after her establishment at Crane's Castle and formal meeting with her tenantry, Marcella was as happy as a bird. Even that cloud no bigger than a man's hand, the threatened danger to Kilmorey, was not allowed to cast a shadow in her way. She saw Bryan almost every day. Either he had a message from his mother, begging her to come and spend a day and night at Inisheen, or he wanted to tell her about some tenant who was deserving or undeserving of her attention, or he had thought of a new flower which would grow well in her garden, or he must help her to arrange a lot of books which he had bought for her on her library shelves. They spent many happy hours together, becoming more and more necessary to each other's existence, till that day seemed lost in which they had not met. Marcella was no longer the thin, fragile girl of the Liberties. The line of her oval cheek had filled into a perfect curve, her dark eyes had got a laughing expression, the carnations of health were blooming in her face as she flitted about her castle and garden, ordering her affairs and planning her improvements. In the evenings she devoted herself to study. Her friends had not yet discovered how wofully ignorant she was. She would work in secret so that they might never discover the full extent of that ignorance.

Taking counsel on this subject with her lady companion, she was surprised to find, by degrees, how very little book education it takes to make a lady. Having become assured through her own observation that an industrious young woman may easily, in the leisure hours of a couple of years, acquire all and more than the knowledge which ordinary girls gain during their years at school, she became less anxious on the score of her deficiencies—only went to work with a will.

Her household management gave her plenty of occupation. Determined to be a lady in every sense of the word, she provided herself with books on the subject of nice household arrangement, and when difficulties came in her way there was Mrs. Kilmorey to be applied to. Having deliberately reduced her income within the limits set to it by her conscience, she ordered her establishment accordingly, greatly to the disgust and disappointment of "The O'Donovan," as Father Daly slyly called her chaperon, who held that the three neat maids and one old butler were a ridiculously small staff of indoor servants for the maintenance of the dignity of the ancient O'Kellys. On this subject Miss Julia O'Flaherty agreed with Miss O'Donovan. It was true that the *ménage* at Mount Ramshackle was

now dependent for comfort on one domestic of a somewhat rude description, but then it was partly the glory of keeping trains of idle retainers that had helped to bring her family to its present state of ignoble dependence.

"When we could do it, we did it," said Miss Julia, as if that settled the matter and cleared the O'Flahertys from all present or future reproach.

"But," said Marcella, "I have no use for a train of servants. Half of the castle is shut up, and Miss O'Donovan and I do not often entertain company. We do not hunt, and at present we are very comfortable as we are."

She had nobler schemes for the use of her spare money than could be included in the expenditure of an unnecessarily showy establishment. But of this she said nothing.

"Hunting is not all selfish extravagance," said Miss O'Donovan. "When my dear father was alive he always kept the hounds, and gave a great deal of employment by so doing."

"So did papa," said Miss O'Flaherty. "Always, until his affairs got into trouble."

"I don't object to hunting, except in excess," said Marcella, and then paused, reluctant to risk giving offence by explaining what were the thoughts that came to her on this subject. To Miss O'Donovan, whose affairs had not been directly affected by the hunt, she was able to speak more openly when Miss O'Flaherty had returned to Mount Ramshackle and the uninterrupted contemplation of former greatness.

"It seems to me," said Marcella, "that though people give employment while they are hunting their prosperity to death, they do on the whole very little good, considering the paralysis that comes upon all their faculties for usefulness after the play is played out and their prosperity is no more. Sport is a good thing, but bankruptcy not so good. Where are the people who were benefited by that excessive expenditure? To pay the mortgages Mr. O'Flaherty put on his property from time to time, he is obliged almost to starve, and he has not a penny to bestow on any one. His tenants are rack-rented, and the money goes to usurers. Look at it as I will, I believe my own plan will prove the best. If I part with my gold I shall hope to see something that I have bought with it, drained lands, or well-built houses in which my people can afford to live, or crops raised on improved seed, or flourishing fisheries, or the working of cottage industries on my property. If I live to see myself impoverished in my home I shall at least look out of my windows at a fairer prospect than lies before them now."

To all of which Miss O'Donovan replied with a sigh that it was a thousand pities Miss O'Kelly had fallen so young into the hands of the Kilmoreys.

"She has been caught by the radical wave, my dear," she said to Miss O'Flaherty afterwards. Miss O'Donovan read the papers a good deal, and was fond of a sounding phrase. "I feel sure she has a democratic strain in her somewhere. All the blood in her

veins is not of the royal blue of the O'Kellys. However, in my fallen estate I am obliged to be patient with her, and I must say she is very kind and attentive, and aware of what is due to me. I could not be more comfortable; all my little luxuries provided for me, just as in my own dear home. And though I *would* like a little more style," etc.

Miss O'Flaherty, who, since she was no longer an heiress presumptive, had become less unaccommodating in her views and ways than formerly, proved by her frequent visits that the comforts to be enjoyed within Crane's Castle under Marcella's management weighed with her, also, against the wrongheadedness of its mistress.

Mr. O'Flaherty, too, soon showed a keen appreciation of Miss O'Kelly's charms as a hostess, and would often drive across country in his shabby little gig, all that remained of the various equipages that had used to roll in and out of the now lop-sided gates of Mount Ramshackle, to pay his respects to the lady of Distresna. As he went he would muse on the advantage to him, and of course to her and the country at large, which would result from a union of the houses of O'Flaherty and O'Kelly. It was evident that this girl had a great notion of making those who lived with her comfortable, but she was lamentably wanting in perception of what was expected of her as the representative of an ancient and distinguished, not to say royal, family. All this he could teach her. No one was better fitted for such a task than himself. Then how pleasant it would be of an evening to see such a sweet young face smiling at him through the steam of innumerable glasses of punch, besides the comfort to his mind of knowing that dear Julia would have a companion at home when he was abroad on unavoidable business or pleasure.

All things considered, he thought it would work very well, and so, persistently but cautiously, for the girl had evidently a will of her own, laid plans for the prosecution of his suit.

He was not the only gentleman of the county who discovered that the lady of Distresna would make a desirable helpmate. The rumor that Mrs. O'Kelly's heiress was a furious radical woman who had spoken on platforms about woman's right's, and walked about the country in a jacket like a man's, and with a shillalah in her hand, ceased to obtain credit. The gilded youth of Connaught having caught glimpses of her blooming face whirling past on the mountain roads on a car, or having lingered for a sight of her coming out of the mountain chapel on Sundays in her white frock and gypsy bonnet, began to blame the women of their families for neglecting to make closer acquaintance with her. By-and-by she began to receive frequent visits from them, and to find herself overwhelmed with invitations to ride, fish, hunt, and dine in the society of her compeers in the county. And Marcella, being no way disinclined for good neighborship, did a little of all that was required of her, when she could manage to find time. It was part of her dream of usefulness to gain as much as possible of the sympathy of all classes, but she laughed in her heart when "The O'Donovan" would point out to her that this or that gentleman had designs on her hand.

"I dare say they all think me a very bad manager, and would like to put me to rights," she said, laughing, and ignoring all the ardent looks and tender words which she could not but know were a tribute to her personal attractions. "However, I am in love with my own position at present, and mean to keep it."

Nevertheless she was pleased to see that her eyes had grown bright, and that there were tints of the rose coming and going under them in her rounded cheeks. She chose herself pretty dresses and wore them with grace. Why should she not try to be as beautiful as she could in one pair of eyes which were often turned on her with an expression she could not read, but which always made her heart beat faster? In her quiet leisure moments, shut in her own room, or sitting in a rocky chair hidden among the cliffs, she would ponder the old subject of wonderment as to what that danger could be which lurked round the footsteps of Bryan Kilmorey. At such times she would take out the ring which she always wore round her neck, look at it and finger it long, and live over again the night when she had sheltered and shielded him from she knew not what —would she ever know from what? She had reason to think that Kilmorey had never suspected her identity with the girl of the Liberties who had saved him. On more than one occasion he had hinted to her of probable trouble for him in the future, in consequence of his own rash action in the past, but neither by word nor look of his could she guess that he knew of any bond that had existed between them before he had met her that night at the entrance to St. Patrick's Hall.

And in the mean time Kilmorey was well aware that, in spite of his resolution to spare the woman he loved the misery of being connected with him in his coming trial, he had again and again conveyed to Marcella the forcible assurance that he loved her. He could not see her without betraying in a hundred ways the secret which ought never to be told. He admitted to himself painfully that he ought to rise up out of this insane dream of impossible happiness which had taken him on the very verge of the tragedy of his life, turn his back upon her home and his home, and determine to see her no more. So serene, so happy as she was with her projects and her people, why could he not leave her among them in peace, removing himself and the shadow of his misfortunes out of the sunshine on her path? She might be grieved and surprised for a time at his hasty cutting of the tie with which he felt he had already bound her; he was not unselfish enough to hope that she would feel no regret; but, after a little interval, would she not thank him for his action, and arrive at a clear understanding of what it meant?

Distracted with these thoughts, he yet waited from day to day, putting off the difficult moment; till at last it was suddenly made known to him that circumstances were about to lift him out of the danger of doing a cruel wrong in snatching at a joy which at his touch must instantly and inevitably link itself with misery for another.

CHAPTER XV.

THE BOLT FALLS.

It was a brilliant summer night; a round golden moon had risen out of the Atlantic and burned its pale lamp high in the dark heavens over Crane's Castle, which, with the surrounding bogs and mountains, had grown weird and ghostly under the yellow-green light lying upon its silent face like a spell of enchantment.

Marcella had entertained a dinner-party that evening, and her guests were gone. Bryan Kilmorey had been invited, but had not come. It sometimes happened that, having declined an invitation to a company dinner, Bryan would arrive just as the last of the diners had departed, and remain an hour with Marcella and Miss O'Donovan. He had been out walking, and had looked in just to make sure that Miss O'Donovan was not displeased with him for declining to appear at table. He had brought a book, a branch of heather with a particularly lovely bloom, or news of somebody who was sick or hungry, or a message from his mother. Such visits included about the happiest hours of Marcella's at present delightful existence.

But on this particular night he had not come. Marcella lingered in the hall in her white evening dress, and at last stepped out of the ponderous old hall door with its pillars of black Galway marble, and down the wide steps flanked by open urns also of black marble, the basins of which she had found, on her coming to the place, overflowing with rain and slime, and had filled with the splendor of blooming azaleas.

There were several things in her mind which she wanted to say to Kilmorey, and above all things she was eager to know that he was safe. She had had a painful dream the night before, in which he and she were again in the old house in Weaver's Square together, and his enemies had broken open the closet door and killed him before her eyes. Looking steadily through the faint sallow light across field, bush, and stream, to the rocky road above the sea, she saw no moving thing; then turned her tired eyes in the other direction, and where the light was most intense upon one spot between herself and some low wet reefs on the shore, she espied a dark object fluttering towards her. At first she took it to be one of those wide-winged cranes from which the Castle took its name, and which haunted about the marshy places around it and the bits of low-lying beach between the cliffs in front of it. However, she soon perceived that this was no bird, but the figure of a man running with his head

down, ducking into all the shadowy places as if to hide himself even from the eye of the moon, and growing larger and more distinct to her vision each time he of necessity darted across an open track of light.

Mechanically she hurried in the direction of the flying figure, and in the shadow of a clump of thorn-bushes, close to where her private grounds adjoined a reeking marsh reflecting the moonlight in a hundred pools, she came face to face with Mike of the mountains, who stopped running when he saw her, and flung himself panting on the ground at her feet.

"Oh, miss, it's you. Sure I thought it was the banshee, an' all was no use. Where's himsel'? Tell him for the love o' God to run for his life. The polis is afther him!"

"Himsel'" meant Kilmorey, as Marcella knew.

"The police! Are you mad?" cried Marcella, in a tone of ridicule, but her heart grew cold and her limbs trembled.

"Sorra mad, my lady. I heard it all, an' I ran like a hare. Bad scran to the bit o' me that isn't eyes and ears since I knew there was somethin' comin' on him. He isn't at Inisheen. They had said he had gone for a walk, an' was maybe here. The polis 'll be down on him in the middle o' the night, an' intend for to take him in his bed."

Marcella put her hand to her head and struggled for presence of mind. That night in the Liberties was vividly before her like a bad dream of which this was the reading. Yet her common-sense told her she should not act on such wild information without knowing what it meant.

"Stand up, Mike, and look at me. What can the police want with Mr Kilmorey?"

"They want him for the murder of Misther Gerald Ffrench Ffont. An' sure he never did the like. An' if he did, wasn't it the widow and the orphan he was doin' it for?" said Mike, doggedly. "An' thim that did it themsel's anyway has informed on him and set the polis afther him. An' it's hanged he'll be if he doesn't fly for his life!"

Marcella grasped a friendly branch of the thorn-tree and steadied herself. She must not die, or swoon, or fall, as any fool might do, while there was time to act.

"Listen to me, Mike. I shall never forget this goodness of yours. Fly off now and search for Mr. Kilmorey along the sea-shore. Do not rest till you overtake him if he is there. I will go myself to Inisheen. One of us may find him. Now, lose no time. Off with you!"

Mike needed no second bidding, and the next instant was out of sight.

Then Marcella cleared the space between her and the house almost as the bird flies. In the hall she turned back and looked in at the drawing-room door.

"I am going to my room, Miss O'Donovan," she said, in her usual tones, "Good-night."

In her own room she put on a long water-proof coat which covered her from chin to heel, and threw a dark shawl over her head.

"If any one meets me on the road even at this hour, I shall be taken for a countrywoman," she reflected, and passed swiftly downstairs, prepared to account for her conduct if any person should meet her. But she saw no one till she got clear across the fields at the back of the house and out by short-cuts on the little frequented high-road that led to Inisheen.

Then she ran as she had never run before, and as she could not have believed it in her power to run. The ground flew from under her feet, and yet it seemed to her that years must have passed before she stepped into the boat and began to paddle herself across the lake. Fortunately the broad deep shadow of the mountain was cast upon the water by the moonlight, so that she was not likely to be seen, even if the family in the little cottage above the shore, who kept Bryan's horses and looked after his boat, had not been sound asleep since nine o'clock.

She reached the island, and, creeping round the house in the shadows, peered in at the windows. She must, if possible, see Bryan alone, and escape observation from every eye but his. Through a chink in Mrs. Kilmorey's shutter she saw the mother reading in her own room, where she had retired for the night. There were lights also in the servants' bedroom windows. The drawing-room windows were open, so was the hall door, but no trace of the master was to be seen. What if he were rambling across the hills and were to meet his pursuers, face to face, unwarned? She hurried wildly round the little lawns, and among the flower-beds and furze-bushes.

"Bryan, Bryan! Oh, God, he is not here!" broke from her in tones that came unmistakably from the depths of her heart. And Kilmorey heard her.

The sound came to him like a whisper of the wind before he saw her or heard her step, and strangely enough the voice did not seem to him like that of the young mistress of Crane's Castle. Its vibrating accent of tribulation carried him back, startled, to the Liberties of Dublin, and when the slight figure wrapped in dark draperies, and the pale face gleaming out of the folds of the loose shawl, passed him the next minute, he believed that it was the girl of the Liberties who had appeared before him.

He stepped out of the shadows that had hidden him, and said,

"Does any one want me? Did I hear my name?"

Then Marcella turned and he recognized her. "Miss O'Kelly—Marcella!" he exclaimed, while the tone and the words still in his ear, and which must have been hers, thrilled again gladly through his memory.

"I have come to tell you something," she said in a whisper. "You must fly from this place at once, and get to Queenstown by to-morrow. You must sail for America. You have not a moment to lose."

"Why?" said Kilmorey, calmly, looking at her eager face raised to his in complete unconsciousness of self. He was thinking not so

much of this crisis of his danger as of the delightful though deplorable assurance that he was beloved by her.

"Because—my God, how am I to say it? Because the police will be here directly searching for you. There is some terrible mistake. They are going to seize you for murder; and they must not do it."

"But they must do it," he said, in a tone of quiet sadness and without stirring an inch. "I have no intention of flying like a man conscious of guilt. This is a misfortune that must be met in the face."

"No, no, it need not," said Marcella, imploringly. "If enemies have made a case against you, why need you give yourself into their hands?"

"Has Mike told you so? I dare say he has his news from good authority, but I have long known all this without his warnings. I have been well aware that a case was being made up against me, and I have stood my ground. What would life be worth to an exiled man who knew himself to be remembered in his own country as a criminal who had fled from justice? So I have chosen to stay in my place, and this moment does not find me unprepared."

Marcella, listening, had grown cold to the heart. She had no admiration at that moment for his courage, felt no delight in his high resolution. Woman-like, she would save him at any cost. A slight breeze stirred the leaves near them, and with a start and a terrified glance towards the lake, she put her hand on his arm and drew him deeper behind the screen of the trees.

Kilmorey could then hardly restrain his great longing to take the bold little hand, so strong in its eagerness to protect, and hold it fast in his own, but he controlled the desire as an impulse of madness. How should a man about to be seized for murder dare to speak of love to a woman? Let him be brave, in this as well as in that which was less difficult. Without any noticeable change in his manner, he said to her,

"As I live under suspicion, I prefer to stand my trial. I want to explain this to you while I still have time. To fly would be in my eyes equal to a confession of guilt. To submit to trial means, let us hope, to be cleared from the shadow of crime and disgrace. Could any friend"—his voice broke a little—"could *you* wish to see me dishonored, even if safe?"

A moan broke from Marcella, and she covered her face with her hands, then suddenly raised eyes again full of burning pain.

"You are too brave, too bold," she said, "and you exaggerate. Dishonor or disgrace could not touch you. It is utterly impossible. Time will clear up this mystery whatever it may be. No man is bound to act as you are doing. Oh, for God's sake, for—"

She could not say "for my sake," though the appeal was almost on her lips. He seemed to catch the words, though they were not spoken, and yet it was only her peculiar gesture as she turned away a moment with an impulse of dignity that supplied them to him. As she did so the impetuous motion of her hand, the swift proud turn of her head, struck him strangely, and he cried,

"Heavens, how you bring another scene before me!"

"Yes," she answered, suddenly aware that it might now be better if all that had ever passed between them were clearly understood. Was not her first interview with him a part of the drama that was now being enacted? She paused, dismayed, and doubtful of how to reveal what she felt she ought to make known. Then, before he had time to speak further, she asked, rapidly,

"What is the chief evidence? Who are the false witnesses against you?"

"I suspect the principal will be informers, the creatures of a debased Fenianism which has sworn my destruction as a seceder from its ranks. Unfortunately, there is some circumstantial evidence against me, and everything will depend, I imagine, on the weakness or strength of that. There exists one person whose testimony—if she can be found, and should be obliged to give evidence against me—would be more damaging than all the rest, and might ruin me—"

"Who is she?" asked Marcella, in an eager whisper.

Kilmorey passed his hand over his eyes and forehead before he looked again at her white face, upraised as if out of a consuming flame of anguish and tenderness.

"She is the girl whom I have so often told you you resembled, whom you look like now; but she had only known me an hour and could not feel for me like this. She saved me once—"

"And now she would save you again. Oh, how strangely you have known me and yet not known me! It was I who opened the door to you that night, I who sent you out again when the danger was past. Look at this ring and see if I do not speak the truth! I have not spoken before, because—because I had no right to know your secrets, but now that this moment has come, I must tell you what I am. Marcella Grace was the girl who sheltered you in the Liberties. If she had stayed in her poverty she would never have borne witness against you, not if they had killed her. Do you think she is likely to betray you now?"

She stopped, choked with her passionate utterance. A great joy at the fact that she held the key of the case against him in her own tightly-clinched hand had come to her vividly across the misery of her fear for him; and as Kilmorey looked at her face suddenly illuminated with smiles, the strangeness of her communication was almost overlooked by him in the peculiar feeling with which he realized what her position had been towards him from the first moment of their meeting. His mind could not now rest on details; he only perceived how her extraordinary statement bound her more and more closely to himself. But in the same moment he decided that he would not take advantage of her pity, given so freely to him from first to last. To open his own heart to her now would be to carry hers with him into that prison of which he hated to think.

After a few moments of silence, during which he struggled for mastery over his will, he said, quietly,

"This is a strange revelation, and yet it does not surprise me as

much as it ought. You have always been associated in my mind with my first benefactress. Only for the impossibility, as it seemed to me—"

"Yet it was all so simple," broke in Marcella. "Mrs. O'Kelly discovered me only a few days after—after that night. She did not want people to know in what scenes she had found me. Then both she and my father died, and I was transported here, as you know. It has all been extraordinary, but has happened as naturally as could be. And the only matter it makes now is that it is I who hold that link in the false evidence which cowards are patching up against you. And they will never trace me here, and I will never speak."

"I trust you may not be called upon," he said—"we will hope it may be so. And now let me ask you one question. Has no doubt of my part in that night's transaction ever crossed your mind? How do you know that I am free from guilt, that I was not blood-stained when I came to you like a thief in the dark?"

"How do I know the sun shines? How do I know that God is good? Why do you ask me so tormenting a question? I saw you as you were that night; I took you to be what you are. And why, oh why will you not now do as you then did?"

"That is, fly? Because I will not repeat the mistake I then fell into. It seemed right and necessary then. It would be cowardice and folly now. I will not vex your ears with the story here. The world and you will know it soon enough."

"I do not want to hear it," said Marcella. "I only know one hideous fact: that miscreants have got you into the toils of their vengeance and are trying to destroy you—"

"Hush! hush! And so you have come all this way," he said, his voice softening in spite of himself as he looked at her piteous white face and disordered locks; "you have travelled the road at night to put yourself again between me and harm. Oh, my dear, you ought not to have done it. Am I not a man and able to face my trial?"

Here a faint sound made Marcella look round and utter a quick cry. Figures could be seen on the opposite shore, pushing the boat out upon the lake.

"They are coming," she said, hoarsely—"they are coming." She fell on her knees and bent her face almost to his feet. "If you have no pity for yourself," she moaned, "have pity on your mother—have pity on me—"

Then he could bear it no longer. He lifted her in his arms and hid her face on his breast.

"Oh, my darling!" he said, "you ought to have let me go without this. I love you, Marcella—I love you! But how can I dare to speak to you? How can a man under a charge for murder presume to ask a woman to be his wife? As yet I have committed no crime. If I take your promise now, I fear I shall indeed be criminal."

"Then you shall be criminal," she said, raising her head, and lowering it again, with tears, "for you cannot refuse to take what I insist on giving to you."

Her excitement was calmed now that she could hold his hand and

feel that he was hers, to shield, to battle for, to live or die for. The prison walls could not entirely shut out her who had a right to be near him, as a mother, almost as a wife has a right. She should be close to him in whatever extremity he might be reduced to. Pain nor sorrow, mystery nor death, could not hinder her from knowing that she belonged to him.

A few more eager words, and then, as they stood there, hand and hand, with cruel separation, perhaps death, drawing nearer every instant to place an inevitable bar between them, the thoughts of both hurried along too painfully for further utterance. Kilmorey kissed and stroked dumbly the brave, bowed head, and held fast the small, strong hand, whose fingers were interlaced with his, as if they would never let go in time or eternity. It was their one sacred moment, overlooked by none of the hard and pitiless eyes which would presently open upon them and stare at their unhappiness. Their joy in each other, and the surpassing anguish of their misfortune, were both their own, a secret between themselves—only while a boat was crossing the lake under the shadow of yonder mountain, and no longer. To-morrow they should stand apart before the world, with the glare of its cruel light in their separate eyes, and the howl of its ready execration in their ears, which could be then no longer soothed by each other's voices.

The sound of steps and voices could now be heard quite near, and Kilmorey said, softly,

"Dear love, we must go. If you love me, do not unman me. Where is your courage? Is this my Joan of Arc who confronted danger for me when I was no more to her than a stranger out of the streets?"

Marcella answered nothing except by a tighter clasp of the hand she held, but raising her head mechanically, began to move by his side in the direction of the voices, like a woman walking in her sleep. Midway between the house and the rocks they met the party of police, who, stepping forward when they saw him, arrested Bryan Kilmorey in the Queen's name for the murder of Gerald Ffrench Ffont, on the 10th of January, in a Dublin street.

Kilmorey received them as calmly as he should have done if they had come to confer a title on him.

"I will give you no trouble, my men," he said, "but I must ask you not to alarm a delicate lady, who is within-doors;" he choked over the words "my mother."

"Never fear, Misther Bryan," said one of the local police who had accompanied the group from Dublin. "We'll be as quiet as mice. And I ask your pardon, sir, for bein' mixed up with this disgraceful business. Of course we all know it's a mistake."

"Thank you, sergeant. It's rather an awkward mistake for me," said Bryan, quietly, as having begged Marcella to go before him into the house, he saw her pass over the threshold. "Now, if you walk about here while I make a few slight arrangements, I will join you again immediately. You needn't be afraid to lose sight of me. I could have kept out of your way if I had wished," he added to the

men, who remained standing outside the house while he went in. He knocked at his mother's bedroom door, entered, and after a few minutes came out again, and passed to his own apartment. Returning quickly, equipped for a journey, he went back to the drawing-room, where Marcella stood motionless waiting for him.

"My mother only knows I am called to Dublin on sudden business. I am forced to leave the rest to you," he said, trying to speak with an air of good cheer; and then they made their farewell, holding each other's hands, and looking in each other's eyes, across the bitter gulf that had already divided them.

CHAPTER XVI.

GOD IS GOOD.

He had besought her not to come with him, even to the door, and she had obeyed him, and remained on the spot where he had left her, and where she had sunk on her knees, until a faint splash caught by her quick ear told her they had left the island. Then, wrapped in her dark cloak, she stole out and watched the boat to the opposite shore, and strained her eyes to see the last of the moving figures that reached the other side.

After all that she went back into the house and softly closed and barred the door, and swathing herself in her wraps, lay her length on her face on Mrs. Kilmorey's sofa. Now that action was no longer possible, she was, between fatigue and sorrow, like a person drugged, and unable longer to distinguish the sharp outlines of the horrors that pressed around her. Only one figure was distinctly present to her among the confused images of her brain—the figure of Bryan Kilmorey travelling along the road to Dublin, moving ever towards a prison, towards dishonor, perhaps towards death. Sometimes starting out of this haunted stupor, she walked about the room as if to keep pace with that terrible movement of his which she could not stop, now and again standing still to look at a small likeness of him on the wall, made long ago, when she was a little half-vagrant child running to the nuns' school in the Liberties, the ardent countenance of a youth who knew no guile, the spirited face of the lad who had rushed, brave of soul, to drill for a dream-warfare in the silence of the lonely glen. Or she would handle reverently the books in which his name was written, or gaze long at his old cremona hanging mute against the wall, kissing humbly the bow with which his fingers had coaxed the music out of its heart, and out of her heart too. The next hour was spent on her knees beseeching Heaven for him, and between the gusts of her prayer her spirit looked back through the storm-clouds of the present to the first beginnings of her connection with him, to the moment when she had looked in his face appealing to her for service, and been allowed to feel that in her poverty and

weakness she could be useful to his manhood. She remembered the strange, sacred yearning with which she had after that looked on him almost as her child because of her service rendered to him and the conviction she had felt that he would again require help at her hands. What help could she give him now, except to be true to him, still to guard skilfully the secret she had kept for him all these months, to share the discredit which half if not all the world would now heap on him, and to sweeten for him, as far as a woman can by her love and fidelity, the suffering and degradation which a mysterious Providence appeared to have decreed that he should endure?

So the night passed, and in the dewy air of the dawn, while the black mountains were turning purple, and the gold stars white, and the still lake was stirring in little freshets of waves round the island, she stole noiselessly out of the house, and bathed her face in the cool water, and smoothed her disordered locks, and sat on the rocks hoping that the morning breeze would remove some of the traces of the night's agony, so that the mere sight of her might not scare the poor mother who had yet to learn from her lips in what direful ways the feet of a beloved son were set. With the rising of the sun an accession of courage came to her. An emergency was at hand and she had got to meet it. She would try to behave like a creature with faith and purpose—faith in God and in him, purpose to rescue him from the darkness that had momentarily covered him. As soon as the servants were stirring in the house she returned there and replied calmly to the surprised looks and words of the old housekeeper.

"Trouble has come on Mr. Bryan, Bridget, and I am here to tell his mother about it. He is gone to Dublin to deal with his enemies. You will know more of it by-and-by. Now take the mistress her breakfast, and hint nothing to her till she has had it. Afterwards I will go to her."

With frightened looks the woman did her bidding, and an hour later Marcella nerved herself for a difficult task, which must be done before news should come flying at random from some outer quarter.

Mrs. Kilmorey was dressed and resting in her easy-chair at the open window before making the effort of moving into the drawing-room, when her door opened and Marcella appeared.

"My dear, what a delightfully early visit! But how tired and agitated you look. You are wearying yourself out with these lucky tenants of yours."

Marcella took her hand and kissed it, a homage she was fond of paying to Bryan's mother, and then dropped on her knees beside her, still holding the invalid's frail hand.

"Mother," she said, softly, "will you have me? Bryan has asked me to be his wife."

"Will I have you? My very dear one! Have I not been longing and praying for this? Thank Heaven for giving my boy the desires of his heart!" and Mrs. Kilmorey folded the girl close to her.

Marcella stifled an hysterical cry, and hiding her face on the moth-

er's neck, tried to poise the sword with which she was to pierce the tender breast on which she leaned. But she could not do it.

"Mother," she began, again commanding her voice with a strong effort, "I will be very good to him, and if ever he is in trouble I will cling to him the more; and people do get into trouble in this world, mother; sometimes the best and noblest get the worst of it."

The suspicion of a sob caught her breath, and with quick alarm Mrs. Kilmorey changed her position and looked her in the face.

"You and I have got to be good to him, and brave for him, mother, for he is in trouble—our Bryan is in trouble."

Mrs. Kilmorey relaxed her hold of the girl, and leaned back in her chair pallid and panting.

"Bryan in trouble! What is it? Good God! have they shot him? My boy, my only son."

The sight of her fear and agony strengthened Marcella, who stood up and said, firmly,

"Not so bad as that, mother. He is alive and well. But there is some horrid mistake, or some spite of an enemy at work. Somebody has implicated him in the shooting of Mr. Ffont last winter. Of course it is nonsense, and everybody will see that is so. I was very wrong to tell you in such a doleful manner. I have frightened you to death. Come, dear little mother; if you and I are not brave, what will people say? We will laugh at the whole thing. We will show them what fools they have made of themselves—"

To all of which Mrs. Kilmorey listened with fixed dreadful eyes, and only answered,

"Where is he?"

"I do not exactly know where he is this moment. He went away quite cheerfully last night. Come, mother, look up. Do not look like that or you will kill me—me, who am going to be his wife when he comes back."

"He was arrested?"

"But by his own will and consent. He was warned, and he would not go. He would rather prove his innocence before the world."

Mrs. Kilmorey did not stir.

"Think what a hero he will be when he comes back, mother. Everybody will do honor to a man who has passed through such a trouble unhurt. His life will be inquired into, his virtues will be known, his good deeds done in secret will come to light. I declare, when I think of it, I could be glad that this thing has happened—that the world may know what a man is Bryan Kilmorey—" Then, suddenly breaking down, "Oh, Bryan; oh, my love, my love!" she wailed, and sinking on her knees again, with her face in Mrs. Kilmorey's lap, let loose the floods of her weeping; and the two women wept and clung together till both were exhausted.

The poor little mother had at last to be carried back to her bed and left in the darkened room unable to speak more, only lifting her tired eyes now and then to the crucifix Marcella had held to her lips, and then hung on the wall where she could see it. And after that Marcella had to go through her day, without possibility of news, or

opportunity for action of any kind, or the chance of any event happening to break the terrible monotony of the long, cruel, smiling, summer hours.

She had at least leisure to write to Bryan, comforting him as to his mother, and saying all that her love and compassion could find words to express, but when the letter was written, she remembered that she did not know to what prison he had been taken, and must wait for tidings.

Towards evening the boat was seen crossing the lake, and, hurrying down to the rocks, she met Father Daly.

"God is good, my child!" was the priest's greeting, and in his eyes she saw that he knew all. "We know that God is good."

Marcella's strength was spent; she tried to speak, but said nothing.

"And strong," went on Father Daly. "He is good and strong, stronger than prisons and falsehoods. Now, my child, you will say 'yes,' whether you feel it or not."

"Yes," said the girl, faintly.

"And I won't allow those black stains round your eyes. Eheu! child; it would frighten the very crows to look at you. We have all a piece of work before us, and if you refuse your share, who's going to step into your shoes? Not another soul in the world could fill your place beside Bryan Kilmorey."

"No one shall get the chance," said Marcella, firmly.

"That's the girl I believed you to be. And how is the poor little mother taking it? I will go and have a talk with her first, and then you and I will lay our heads together over this matter. It will be found that Bryan was not altogether unprepared for this crisis, and you will see that things will go well."

And then Marcella walked the paths outside while the priest went in and helped the mother to wrestle with her anguish, while the slow-coming night wore on; and as the moonlight began to shine, the girl lived over again the scene of last night, now extracting the sweetness from the agony and hiving it in her heart of hearts, now losing all sense of it in her overwhelming tribulation.

In spite of his brave assured words, and of her own determination to hope, she felt a lurking fear that he himself had believed a plausible case had been made up against him.

And as the stars quickened and throbbed above her head, each like a fiery point of pain, she thought of how at this moment the news of the arrest of Bryan Kilmorey was flying from mouth to mouth in Dublin streets, and of how the newspaper venders were yelling the tidings through the thoroughfares, and up and down the lanes, and past the old house in Weaver's Square where she had harbored him on that most blessed yet most terrible night which had first brought her life into contact with his, and at the same time had projected this horrible shadow of misfortune upon his future.

CHAPTER XVII.

THE MISSING LINK.

BRYAN KILMOREY was lodged in Kilmainham prison, and the world talked of his guilt, which was accepted as a foregone conclusion, and rejoiced over as the long-missing link, discovered at last, between the Nationalists, with whom this man had openly ranked himself in politics, and the Fenians, to whose councils he had all the while secretly belonged.

His arrest caused a profound sensation in Dublin. In the best circles scarce a voice was lifted in his favor. It was taken for granted that a man of good family and education, who had so far forgotten the traditions of his class and his duty to his queen as to become a Fenian, was quite capable of lying in wait for his fellow-man and fellow-landlord at a street corner, and doing him to death under cover of darkness. To suggest that a man ought to be held innocent till proved guilty was to be looked on as a secret advocate of murder, or, at least, as one in "sympathy with crime."

For rumor already said that it would be proved in the forthcoming trial that Kilmorey had been a Fenian for years. According to a Central News telegram he was an agent for the American dynamite party, and in the caves and cellars of the isle of Inisheen, where he had of late surlily withdrawn himself from the society of his neighbors in the county, stores of arms and ammunition had been discovered, with material for the manufacture of explosives sufficient to reduce London to a heap of dust.

Many people who had long looked upon him as an enthusiast, but knew him to be quite incapable of crime, were so bewildered at finding themselves objects of disgust and suspicion for holding favorable opinions of him, that they withdrew from his defence, and went blindly with the stream.

Some good, easy, honestly selfish folk, who had always tried to believe that God had created them solely to take care of themselves, and who had occasionally felt Kilmorey's theories and practice with regard to the lower classes a thorn of reproach in their sleek sides, looked on this misfortune that had befallen him as a judgment upon his folly in meddling with misery that need not have concerned him, and silently wished him well out of the scrape, while they reflected comfortably that the necks of wiser men like themselves could never be placed in such imminent danger.

It was said that startling revelations, surpassing the inventions of romance, might be expected on the trial, but the detectives kept

their secrets, and society languished on the rack of suspense. The whispers averred that a woman had been mixed up in the plot; some said a girl of low degree, others said a lady; while one version of the tale set forth how a beautiful needle-woman and a wealthy lady of title, both sworn Fenians, and both interested in Kilmorey, had been aiders and abettors of the murder, and were now in danger of being hanged.

Not a few good women thought of his mother, and, hugging their own boy-babies, pitied her for bringing such a monster into the world; while others, of a harder nature, were sure the mother of such a wretch must be worse than himself. Those who had known Mrs. Kilmorey in younger days were fain to remember, even when they spoke gently of her, how warm she had always been on the National side of politics, and held her in some degree accountable for the evil-doing of her son.

The fact that there was a mother in the question was mentioned in all the papers, and the "Press Association" discovered that the said mother was six feet high, with a masculine voice, and had been implicated, while Bryan was still a child, in International outrages abroad, when she had escaped from pursuit disguised as a man.

As yet Marcella's connection with the case had not been unearthed, or, at least, if anything of it was known, the public had not been taken into the confidence of those whose business it is to make such discoveries. Every morning she scanned the papers with burning eyes, dreading to see mention of her own name, or of the house in Weaver's Square, but nothing of the kind appeared, and she allowed herself to hope that no clew existed to that occurrence of the eventful night in January in which she had played so active a part.

The allusions to a woman, to a needle-woman, or lady of title, or both, as having been mixed up in the transaction of the plot to murder, startled her, but as the rumor was vague in the extreme, and seemed to die away instead of gaining more definite form, she hoped that the only foundation for it lay in the bare fact that the police had searched the house in Weaver's Square. Her father's death, accounting for her own disappearance from the scene, and her subsequent sudden and complete change of estate, had, she believed, cut off all probability of further inquiry into the particulars of that midnight search.

Still, every hour of the day and night she was conscious of the reality of that scene in the old house. Even in her troubled sleep she could not lose sight of the dimly visible closet door, could not forget her anxious vigil while listening for the great bell of "Patrick's" tolling the hour which was to enable her to set her prisoner free in safety. It was all so present to her mind that she fancied people would read the story in her eyes or hear the terror of it in her voice, and in those first days of Bryan's inprisonment she was divided between her desire to be in Dublin, close to Kilmainham, and her dread that the reappearance of her face in the streets of the city might in some way bring to mind and to light the daring and secret action of the Liberties' girl who had hidden the present pris-

oner from the officers of justice, in the hour of and not far from the scene of the murder for which he was now to be tried.

For the first week or so Mrs. Kilmorey's illness was a positive reason for remaining quietly at Inisheen, but as soon as the poor little mother had recovered from the effects of the first shock she began to make piteous entreaties to be taken to Dublin, where she might be within easy reach of her son.

Then she consulted with Father Daly as to what was the best thing to be done. Neither to him nor to the mother, more than to any other living soul, had Marcella whispered the reason why she dreaded to be seen in Dublin. They had as little cause to think that she had ever beheld Bryan Kilmorey in her life before she had met him under Mrs. O'Kelly's chaperonage at the Patrick's ball as had the world at large, and it seemed to her almost as desirable to keep all information to the contrary from their knowledge now as to hide it from the chief of the police. And so it happened that both Mrs. Kilmorey and Father Daly looked on in wonder and doubt at her evident distress and hesitation when the proposal to remove to Dublin, in company with and in charge of Bryan's mother was confidently laid before her.

A look of misery came into her face which startled both these true hearts when she said,

"Would it not do for the mother to come with me to Crane's Castle and remain quietly there till the trial is over? Father Daly could bring our messages to and fro—and there is the post. Perhaps we should only do mischief by our presence."

Mrs. Kilmorey turned her face to the wall with a moan and said no more. It was clear to her that too much had been expected of this girl in the fulness and promise of her youth and her heiress-ship, with the world before her and the brightest possibilities at her feet. She had thrown herself into an engagement with Bryan, not dreaming of the tragedy in which it was to involve her. Though she suffered for him, and refused to believe in his guilt, might she not naturally recoil in dismay at the prospect of the heavy and perhaps enduring cloud which would overshadow a future connection with him? Might she not feel that she ought to be released from her promise and be allowed to go away to happier scenes while the painful drama was being enacted in which she shrunk from playing her part?

The conviction that such was the state of Marcella's mind in the reaction which might be supposed to have followed her first burst of faith in and sympathy with him heaped fresh fuel on the fire of the widow's tribulation, but she resolved to do her duty, and begged Father Daly to speak to the girl on the subject of a release from her engagement.

Father Daly tried to enter into Mrs. Kilmorey's views, and admitted that she might be right. It was true that Marcella was changed, and that she showed an unmistakable cowardice about going to Dublin, which must be attributed to her horror of appearing before the eyes of the world as the affianced wife of a man in

prison under charge of murder. No doubt the mind of an impressionable girl might almost give way under the pressure of such circumstances. A pleasant life awaited her could she but sever herself from the painful associations which at present surrounded her. Already there were many callers at Crane's Castle to express sympathy with her as one who had been innocently betrayed into friendship with people so dreadful as the prisoner of Kilmainham and his mother. Each visit and letter of Miss O'Donovan put some fresh proof before Marcella of how eagerly a safe and pleasant world was endeavoring to save her from the consequences of her own rashness. Why should the girl be supposed to be a heroine merely because she had shown generous impulses, and had not been able to help loving Bryan Kilmorey, whom every one loved?

To approve of a man while he was safe and well and in an honorable position was one thing. To cleave to him when he stood aloof from society, execrated by the crowd, and suspected by even the most charitable—when standing by him meant pain and sorrow and humiliation—Father Daly saw that that was quite another matter. And so he consented to speak to Marcella.

She was walking up and down the path above the rocks as she was accustomed to do while the priest took her place beside Mrs. Kilmorey. The day was a glorious one in the end of July, but the sumptuous coloring of mountain, moor, and water had no longer meaning or beauty for Marcella, whose eyes saw only, wherever they turned, the prison walls and barred gates of Kilmainham.

Father Daly joined her and walked up and down with her for a few minutes trying to keep pace with her restless steps, till at last he said,

"My dear, the mother and I have been talking about you, and I want to tell you the conclusion we have come to, if you will give me your attention. We think you ought not to be asked to go to Dublin at present, ought not to get yourself mixed up with this trial."

"I will not be mixed up in it," said Marcella, a hectic spot growing on her cheek as the familiar dread rose and stared her in the face, the fear of being confronted with those policemen to whom she had spoken on the night of the murder, and who, with the keen shrewdness which she imagined must belong to their class and office, would be sure to remember her.

Father Daly was shocked into silence. Her cowardice disappointed him. Yet he had made up his mind that she was to be excused and must do as she pleased, and he would be patient with her.

"I do not want to be mixed up in it," she said, "because I believe no good could be done that way. What would be gained by the presence of his mother in Dublin? She is not able to visit him, and she would be more lonely and afflicted there than here. My plan is that she should come with me to Crane's Castle, where I will nurse her and take care of her till all this trouble passes over."

Then Father Daly thought she spoke lightly, and he felt less compunction for her, and spoke a little more of his mind.

"I think she will go to Dublin, but do not trouble yourself about that. I will make arrangements for her there. You see, love naturally looks on things with peculiar eyes, and to be near Kilmainham will be to her a sort of satisfaction. And, my dear, after a few more days there will be nothing to hinder your return to Crane's Castle and to comfortable friends."

A little wild sob of a laugh broke from Marcella which had almost been a cry of anguish. It was natural she should be misunderstood, yet how was she to account for herself? Better be thought heartless and fickle than that she should thrust herself into the danger of being called on to bear witness against Bryan Kilmorey, to give evidence in the case for his prosecution which he himself had admitted might prove almost overwhelming. By hiding among the bogs and mountains she could shield him as she had shielded him before; by weakly yielding to the temptation to see him and be near him, and also to clear herself of hateful suspicion in the eyes of those who also loved him in their own way, she might prove to be his undoing.

He himself could not suspect her. He would know or guess the motive of her conduct. In his letters he did not hint at the danger that was in her mind, and she never dared to put any allusion to it on paper, lest her letter might be read by other eyes than his own.

Yes, let Father Daly see her conduct by the light in which he had just shown it to her. Let Mrs. Kilmorey abhor her as a slight thing whose enthusiasm for a noble man had been blown away by the first breath of the storm. Better even that Bryan himself should believe her to be untrue than that her voice should be lifted to condemn him.

She would lie by here, ignored and forgotten, till, the trial over, the informers confounded, and the absence of all corroborative evidence having saved the accused from the consequences of their machinations, he should be set free, acquitted before the world. Better, if he were then to turn away from her as a creature who had failed him in the hour of his need, as seeming gold that had been tried in the fire and proved to be dross, than that, using her as a tortured instrument, his enemies should prevail.

This thought pressing on her with increasing force hardened her resolution, and enabled her to say to Father Daly, while that strange little laugh of hers was still paining his ears,

"Of course I know I am my own mistress, and at Crane's Castle I will stay till this is over. If Mrs. Kilmorey will not stay with me, then I fear she must go alone, as you suggest."

After this, preparations were made for Marcella's return to Crane's Castle and Mrs. Kilmorey's departure for Dublin. How the poor little mother who found it difficult to move from one room to another in her home should manage to accomplish the journey was a problem to every one except herself, but she never doubted that the strength of her love would cut the way for her through an army of seeming impossibilities. Meanwhile she and Marcella spoke less and less together of the subject at both their hearts. Mrs. Kilmorey had

accepted it as a settled thing that the girl, eager to save herself from being mixed up in a scandal, had retreated from her position as Bryan's affianced wife, and would take the opportunity of his mother's departure for the city to withdraw all but a friend's interests (and perhaps even that too) from those with whom she had so unfortunately connected herself, not dreaming at the time of discredit and disgrace.

And still the proofs multiplied that others were able and willing to help Marcella out of her unhappy dilemma. More cards, invitations, and such tokens of good-will were brought by Miss O'Donovan to Inisheen, having been left at Crane's Castle for Miss O'Kelly by the surrounding gentry, good people who drove great distances to show their willingness to reclaim the heiress of Distresna, who was so young and who had received a foreign education, and who ought for all sorts of reasons to be forgiven for having dropped into sad mistakes at the very outset of her career.

CHAPTER XVIII.

THE INQUISITOR.

It was the tourist season, the time of year when the few strangers who ever find their way into the highlands of Connemara may be seen climbing on long cars, or standing about looking dissatisfied and supercilious on the door-steps of country inns and half-way houses, or can be heard "drawing out" innocent-looking car-drivers whose sly answers they accept in the most literal manner, and whom they therefore do not find so witty as they had been led to expect.

A gentlemanly-looking man, who appeared to be a tourist, for he was certainly a stranger, and seemed to have no business in travelling but to gaze about at the scenery and question the driver about the state of the country, took one morning the seat next the horses on the long car from Galway, and made himself as comfortable as the circumstances would permit. There were two points of evidence in favor of his being a native of our island, even if a tourist: one was his rich, rolling, though by no means vulgar brogue, the other was the fact that he grumbled at nothing that happened. The splendid weather and the glowing scenery evidently rejoiced him, and as he presented a cigar to the gladdened driver, it was with an eye-twinkle of sympathy which had never been learned on the thither side of the Channel.

This eye-twinkle was only one small outward sign of a curious power of sympathy possessed by the man, somewhat like the power by which the snake-charmer is supposed to charm the snake. We hear in these days a great deal of the strange exercise of volition by which one person draws another to move from place to place, but this traveller's specialty was to induce people to speak their minds to him truly, whether it were for their interest to do so or no. Just

as the serpent comes forth out of its hiding-place at the sound of the charmer's piping, so would the fondly hidden thought issue from the lips of the reticent at the will of this apparently uninquisitive and easy-mannered gentleman, and many who had thoroughly enjoyed his company would, having left it, feel a sudden reaction leading them to search their memories for their secrets, much as they might on other occasions feel in their pockets for the safety of purse and watch.

This being so, Mr. O'Malley, who lived by judicious exercise of his singular power, and enjoyed the practice of it even in unofficial moments, passed his time very pleasantly during the long day's journey into the mountains, and filched more or less information which would be useful to him hereafter from his unconscious fellow-passengers, who had no idea that their brains were being picked.

At present he was abroad on decidedly official business, but, as a painter on his way to paint the portrait of a great man which he expects to bring him fame may beguile his journey by making sketches which will work up into future pictures, so did the great agent of the police make studies peculiar to his own art as he hastened towards the most promising and interesting piece of work which his experienced hands had touched for many a day.

He was going to lay hold of an important piece of evidence in a pending criminal prosecution which it was highly desirable should end in conviction and punishment of the accused. There had been some trouble in tracing up this witness, but all that was over, and now there only remained to claim her assistance for the prosecution. For it was a woman who held this power in her hands, and a pretty woman too, as Mr. O'Malley had been credibly informed.

He put up for the night at a small inn among the mountains, much to the surprise of the driver, who, disappointed at losing him for the rest of the journey, tried to convince him that no sport of any kind was to be found on the spot where he proposed to remain. However, there Mr. O'Malley stayed till morning, when he hired a small car and started early, accompanied by a quiet-looking man who had the day before occupied a seat on the opposite side of the public conveyance and had also passed the night at the inn. Early in the golden afternoon they left their car at a way-side cottage which signalled "lodging and entertainment for man and beast," and walked a mile till they reached the shore of the lake which encircled Inisheen.

Marcella was sitting reading to Mrs. Kilmorey on a low seat by her couch. Neither woman gave her mind to the sense of what was read, but the mere exercise of pretending to hear and understand, of making believe to turn the thoughts from one ever-present subject, was a sort of necessity for both in the long monotony of their day in this solitude.

The mother's brain was busy counting the hours and moments that must still elapse before she should find herself on the road to Dublin. The journey was to begin to-morrow, but to-morrow seemed far away to her impatient expectation. In the mean time, Marcel-

la's voice rather irritated than soothed her. She began to feel that it would be a relief to her to get away from this girl who so visibly suffered through Bryan's misfortune, yet had not the courage to take up her cross and be a martyr for his sake.

Marcella while she read, simply felt that this reading afforded her a sort of grasp by which she held herself balanced over a precipice which might any moment ingulf her. The continual utterance of words, words, words, which bore no meaning to her mind, were so many jerks which broke the thread of consecutive thought, and kept it from winding round her throat and strangling her. She also was aware that it would be a relief to be separated from the unhappy mother who must be allowed to misunderstand her so terribly, who was going on her lonely way to-morrow, that to-morrow which would thus sever the link which bound her, Marcella, in with the daily chain of a slowly unfolding tragedy. How she was to live after that link had been snapped, and she found herself alone with her grief and horror in the desert region of Crane's Castle, she could not dare to ask herself. And so the reading went on, more words without meaning, more sound without sense, anything to make a monotonous noise that should interrupt thought and forbid conversation, till the little parlor-maid opened the drawing-room door, and said that a gentleman wanted to see Miss O'Kelly.

Nothing more unexpected could well have happened to interrupt the perfunctory reading, for the virtuous county people, with all their charity towards Marcella, had known where to draw the line in making their demonstrations, and every one, even the impatient Mr. O'Flaherty, had forborne to make a call at Inisheen.

Therefore, if the venerable golden eagle who was supposed to haunt the topmost crags of Ben-dhu overhanging the lake had been found tapping for admittance at the cottage-windows, the circumstance would not have been more surprising than was this announcement of a gentleman's visit.

He was shown in, and though seen to be a complete stranger, was invited to take a chair opposite the ladies, for he looked like a man who had come there for a purpose. Mrs. Kilmorey thought he might be her son's solicitor arrived with some comforting intelligence. Marcella had time to think of nothing before meeting the strange man's eyes fixed upon hers, full of that latent power of seeing through thick veils, and luring forth the truth from its seemingly secure hiding-place; and having met and instinctively recognized the look, she knew who he was and what errand had brought him there. The day she had prayed might never rise had dawned and had already passed its noon. The hour she had dreaded and hidden from was at hand. It was not at Miss O'Kelly, the heiress, that this person was looking with that strange, conciliating, yet pitiless glance which made her suddenly feel as if stealthy fingers were upon her throat, but at Marcella Grace, the audacious girl whose daring hands and deceiving tongue had interfered with the law, and upon whom the law would now be revenged.

For one moment she quailed and sickened, and from the depths

of her soul cried to the earth to swallow her; the next her resolution had come to her aid and stood as a bar between her and the enemy.

"Mrs. Kilmorey," began the visitor, addressing the small frail woman who sat up on her couch with a glimmer of hope in the pale-blue eyes that strained towards him, "I am sorry to have to come here on a painful errand, and I will try to hurt you as little as possible. My business is with this young lady, and if I may see her alone it will save you some uneasiness, perhaps."

"If it is anything connected with my son's affairs, I want to know it at once," faltered the mother, shuddering under the ominous warning of his words. "I am the nearest to him—no one is so near as a mother. Nothing must be hid from me."

Mr. O'Malley sighed. This white, trembling ghost of a mother was harder to deal with than the masculine personage for whom rumor had prepared him. But his time was precious, and the indulgence of sentiment was no way included in the rôle of his duty.

He merely remarked, as he took a note-book from his pocket, "I should have preferred to have seen this lady alone. But it must be as you will."

Marcella, having rapidly reviewed the position in her mind, also felt that a struggle would be useless, and sat perfectly still, holding the closed book upright on her knees with both hands, as if it were the outward form of that barricade which she had erected and meant to stand between her and the powers that were set to destroy Bryan.

"Now, I must beg of you not to be frightened or annoyed at anything I am going to say to you, Miss O'Kelly," pursued the visitor, as, having glanced over a page of his note-book, he closed it, keeping his finger on the page, and looked mildly but firmly at Marcella. "If I ask you questions, pray believe that personal inquisitiveness has nothing to do with them. You and I have both a duty to discharge, and I rely on you to co-operate with me in a matter of very serious and solemn moment, by telling me all that you remember hearing on the circumstances which I shall suggest to you."

Marcella bowed her head, and for one moment drooped her eyes, only to fix them again on his. Her face had grown sharp and white during the last few minutes, and only the eyes, dark, wide-awake, and full of intelligence, seemed to live in it. Lips, brow, and chin were set as if in a swoon.

"I have addressed you by your present name as Miss O'Kelly, but I will now speak to you as Miss Marcella Grace. It was as Marcella Grace that you were concerned in the matter of which I am now about to question you."

"There you make a mistake," said Mrs. Kilmorey, with an accent of faint triumph. "She is the daughter of a cousin of the late Mrs. O'Kelly of Distresna and Merrion Square, Dublin. Her name never was Grace."

Marcella made no remark, and Mrs. Kilmorey sunk back on her cushions exhausted.

Mr. O'Malley glanced at her with sympathy, and then pursued his examination of Marcella.

"You lived during last January in the large gable house at the corner of Weaver's Square in the Liberties of Dublin? You lived there with your father, who was a weaver of poplin?"

Marcella's lips moved in assent.

"You remember the night of the 10th of January?"

"Yes, I remember it well. The police roused my father and me from our rest, and demanded to search the house. My father was angry, but had to submit because of the Coercion Act. The police searched and went away, having found nothing they were looking for."

There was a burning light in her eyes now, and the color had come into her lips again. Her glance never flinched as she made her statement.

"Is that all you remember of the night of the 10th of January last? Try and think about it a little. Did you not admit any one that night at an unusual hour?"

"No."

"Indeed! You are sure of that? No one knocked at the door as you were sitting up late at your work and asked for shelter?"

"No one."

Mr. O'Malley looked at her silently for a few moments, then said, "Ah!" and again reflected a little as he knit his brows over his note-book.

"There is a secret closet in that house in which you were then residing, Miss O'Kelly," he continued, presently, as if he had been quite satisfied on the other point and had let it go.

"Yes."

"You did not show it to the police that night when they were making their search, nor tell them of its existence?"

"No."

"You were quite sure no one was hiding in it on that occasion?"

"Yes."

Mr. O'Malley made an entry in his book, and again resumed his questions, as if quite content with the answers he had already received.

"Now tell me, when did you first learn that a murder had been committed on that night of the 10th, not far from the street in which you lived?"

"My father told me the next morning. We knew nothing of it till he brought the paper in."

The terrible questioner closed his book and leaned back slightly in his chair, while he fixed his quiet, observant gaze on those tortured, burning eyes of hers, and lowered his voice, with a swift glance at the motionless form of the mother, who lay, whether listening or not it were hard to tell, and made no sign as the inquisition went on.

"Now, Miss Grace, I want you to tell me what was the special

occasion on which you first made the acquaintance of Mr. Bryan Kilmorey."

"I met him at the St. Patrick's ball at Dublin Castle, where my relative, Mrs. O'Kelly, introduced me to him."

"And never before that night?"

"Never."

Mr. O'Malley made no remark, but sat looking at her with that gentle, penetrating gaze under which her heart froze and burned with the pain of her falsehood. And while he observed her he was thinking,

"She lies bravely, but the lie will destroy her. When a truthful spirit consents to falsehood, there is war between body and soul. Even if we had no case to be completed by her evidence she must be got to speak the truth, to save her own life or reason."

He drew the strap across his note-book, and took up his gloves as if all were over and he was going; but as he stood up, hat in hand, he suddenly said,

"And you are prepared to swear that on the night and in the hour of Mr. Ffont's murder you did not admit Bryan Kilmorey secretly into your house, did not listen to his prayer for shelter, did not hide him in that secret closet, nor liberate him from it the next morning early, long after the fruitless visit of the police, who were searching for him? You are prepared to swear all this if need be?"

"I am."

"That is all, then. I will not trouble you with any more questions for to-day. But I must tell you, Miss Grace, that, unpleasant as I fear it will be to you, you will be summoned, and will be bound to appear on the trial of Bryan Kilmorey, and you are expected to give evidence in accordance with the circumstances I have stated to you, and which are believed to be facts."

Marcella had also stood up, and had never removed her unhappy eyes from his face. When he quitted the room, which he did with a certain polite abruptness, she followed him to the hall door, where he turned and looked at her inquiringly, encouraging her to speak whatever thought was struggling within her for utterance.

She advanced a step to him, her hands outstretched: the spell of this man's strange power was upon her, urging her to tell him everything, to claim his help, his counsel. He looked strong, kind, sympathizing; he would rid her of this torturing lie that was already eating her heart, he would guard her confidence, and advise her as to what course of conduct might be best for her in Bryan's interests.

Seeing her thoughts in her face, O'Malley stepped back across the threshold, removing his hat again, and taking her kindly by the hand.

"You have something more to tell me," he said; "speak, do not be afraid. You are not one to live through the part you have undertaken. Have mercy on yourself."

But at the same moment Marcella regained her presence of mind, and by force of will broke the spell to which she had nearly yielded.

"I have lived through trouble already," she said. "I can live

through more. I have spoken, and I have nothing to add. But will you not come in and take some refreshment? If Mr. Kilmorey were—at home," she said, forcing a bright smile—"if he were in his rightful place, he would not let you go in this inhospitable fashion. Neither would his mother, but she is ill—"

"Thank you, I have ordered lunch not far away, and I will torment you no more to-day," he answered, pitiful of her scorched eyes, that seemed, in spite of her words and bearing, to moan to him to go. And so he left her, and went rapidly towards the boat, where his henchman was awaiting him.

Then Marcella went back to the drawing-room, still strong in her knowledge that she had baffled Bryan's enemies, that she had denied them the morsel of evidence they were hungering for, that she had broken the chains they were forging, and overthrown their plots, and that, though she died of the pain of her sin, she would set him free.

Mrs. Kilmorey was sitting upright on her couch, watching for the girl's return, and immediately began to talk to her.

"What did that dreadful man mean by asking you such extraordinary questions, Marcella? And tell me what you answered him. My mind is so confused. It seemed to me he mistook you for somebody else. And yet you allowed him to suppose you were somebody else. I think I was in a kind of swoon part of the time, so that I did not follow all that was said."

"He did not mistake me for any one else, mother. He has found out who I am, who I was—that is all. I had hoped they would not find me out But it has not done them any good—their tracking me."

"I do not understand you in the least. He called you Marcella Grace. Was that ever your name?"

"It is my real name. I might have told you so any day, only it seemed so unnecessary; and there were one or two good reasons for not bringing it forward."

"And your father? Did that man not say that your father was a weaver of poplin?"

"He said so; and it was true. My father and I were very, very poor until Mrs. O'Kelly found us. It was by my mother, my poor young mother, who had made a strange kind of marriage through reverse of fortune, that Mrs. O'Kelly was related to me. She did not wish it known that we were exactly what she found us."

"Nothing surprises me now," said Mrs. Kilmorey, pathetically. "And it does not matter, except that you might have confided in me. But what," she went on, putting her hand to her head—"what did he mean by asking you about the police searching your house on the night of the murder, and about where you hid Bryan? You said you never saw him till the night of the St. Patrick's ball, and you held to that. It was true, Marcella, was it not? Look me in the face and say it was true."

There was an agony in her eyes that Marcella could not lie to. She dropped on her knees, and pressed the mother's cold hand to her own burning eyes.

"It was not true. I had seen Bryan before. I have denied it to them, but I cannot go on deceiving you. I have sent him away baffled, that man; but I know he has not done with me. He will come back; they will set on me, now they have got the clew, and I shall be worried and torn like a hunted animal. But they shall not get the truth from me—the wicked, false truth that would pretend to make Bryan guilty. So never fear, mother, I will not tell! only I must speak truth to you when you look at me like that."

"Where had you seen him?"

"You heard it said. That dreadful man with his kind eyes and his gentle voice, he told it all in your presence, but maybe you did not hear him. How they got the information I cannot guess, for even my father did not know what happened."

"*What* happened?"

"I was sewing late at night, that hateful night. I was a poor, a very poor girl, sewing to earn a sixpence. My father had gone to bed. He was weak and old and failing from his work, and I was almost in despair because I could earn so little. I heard a knock at the door and a man asked to come in, and it was Bryan. I had never seen him before, but in a moment I saw what he was. I let him in because of the tone of his voice, and I hid him because of the look in his face. And after he was hid safely, the police came and searched, and did not find him, and went away. And my father was angry at the disturbance, because he knew nothing about a man being hidden in the house. Very early in the morning I let Bryan out of the closet, that closet you heard mentioned, and he went away. And afterwards I met him at the St. Patrick's ball, but he did not know me though I knew him. And he never knew me all the long time I have been here, until they came to take him from us; and he told me that a girl who had hidden him that night in Weaver's Square might give the most telling evidence that could be produced against him. Then I told him who I was, that his mind might be at rest."

An ashen look had been creeping over Mrs. Kilmorey's face while she listened. The strange information just given only meant one thing for her. Marcella's confession as to her own antecedents scarcely touched her. If the girl had told her she had been, before coming to Inisheen, a beggar, craving alms in the street, or a royal princess standing beside a throne, she would have felt no surprise. One only and terrible thought had taken possession of her as she listened; what brought Bryan into hiding on such a night and at such an hour?

"You took him in," she muttered; "you hid him. Bryan Kilmorey hiding because a murder had been done! Did he tell you why he hid, what had brought him there? My God, girl, speak! Tell me the rest, or you will kill me."

"I do not know the rest," said Marcella, with dry lips. "I never asked him. I would not ask him, unless he chose to tell me—not in a hundred years; whatever brought him there, it was nothing wrong. That much he said, though it was not necessary to me to hear it."

Mrs. Kilmorey stared at her dumbly, with a look that asked a terrible question, a question that Marcella would not see.

"I must know why Bryan hid that night. I am his mother, and I must know. I cannot live on quietly like anybody else—like you—without having so terrible a mystery cleared up. The Fenians did the murder, no doubt, and Bryan was a Fenian. I brought him up to it. I filled him with romantic love for his country, and I did not know what I had done till I found he had rushed, child as he was, headlong into the arms of a secret society. He thought to shake himself free of them, but they have had him in their clutches. How do I know what they have not compelled him to do?"

Her voice sunk into a terrified whisper, while the look of horror deepened and widened in her eyes.

"I do not know what you mean," said Marcella, coldly.

The mother hid her face and moaned.

"You must know what I mean. You shall know what I mean. I cannot bear such a burden alone. I shall go mad in an hour if you do not help me under this fear—"

"You mean that you doubt he may be guilty."

"Oh, God! oh, God! that I should endure to hear you say it!"

"You, his mother! Yes, indeed, you ought to be ashamed," said Marcella. "You who nursed Bryan Kilmorey on your knee and brought him up to be a man, and knew his thoughts, and his actions, and his aspirations, to turn and be a traitor to him because of a little base, lying, circumstantial evidence! Oh, I thought Bryan had a mother who loved and believed in him; and, poor fellow, he so believed in you, and was so thankful to you for educating him as you did, was so proud of your devotion to Ireland and to your poor fellow-creatures, so glad that you had taught him early to think more of the sufferings of others than of his own ease; and you reward him for all this trust by harboring such a hideous doubt of him. You imagine that he, who had courage to go out a mere boy to learn to use his gun in honorable warfare for a glorious cause, could afterwards, in his mature manhood, be coward enough to strike another man to death in the dark!"

"Spare me," wailed Mrs. Kilmorey, "spare me."

"You have not spared yourself," said Marcella, scornfully. "I am only a poor girl, and it is not a year yet since I first knew Bryan; but such a detestable thought of him could never have entered my head; and you his mother—his mother. Just Heaven! what will the world say when *she* can doubt him?"

"You do not know the horrors of the working of a secret society," persisted the mother; but something of the maddened tension of her gaze had relaxed, as she followed with hungry eyes every movement of Marcella's eyes and lips while she reproached her, as if life and health and hope were all being rained down on her with the scorn from the girl's face and voice; "you do not know how pitiless orders are given, and how death follows at once if they are not carried out."

"I have heard of it," said Marcella, "and Bryan is one who would

have unflinchingly accepted the doom of disobedience. He would have refused to kill, and would have died."

"His oath—" murmured the mother.

"Had been retracted. He had separated himself from Fenianism long before—he is the victim of the vengence of a secret society for having deserted it. If he dies, he will die a martyr, even though his own mother—"

A cry came from Mrs. Kilmorey, and she broke into wild weeping. Marcella was on her knees by her side in an instant.

"Oh, mother, mother! why will you torture your own heart and mine imagining impossibilities? He will be safe because he is innocent."

"My darling!" sobbed the mother, holding her to her heart, "you have conquered for me. You have driven the demon away from me. Never again shall such a maddening fear get possession of me; you are worthy to be his wife, Marcella, and I—I—have been wronging you too."

"I know you have," said the girl, quietly, "but this dreadful thing that I have feared has come to make us understand each other better. Now that it has come, I have met the worst, and we will go to Dublin; I shall not be afraid of being seen in the streets now that they know me and have followed me here; I shall have to go to the front and defy them."

Then followed long explanations, in which Marcella made the mother understand the motives which had been at work in her; and after all had been said and realized, Mrs. Kilmorey remained aghast at the girl's quiet resolution to deny the truth that would lie to condemn Bryan.

The idea remained fixed in her mind, "They shall not get it from me, that morsel of cruel evidence which they would distort to their own purposes; I, only, hold it in my hand. They may kill me, but they shall not have it."

The very next day a document arrived, in which she was formally summoned to appear on the trial, which was to take place in December, as a witness in support of the case of the Crown against Bryan Kilmorey, for the murder of Gerald Ffrench Ffont, on the night of the 10th of January.

"They are determined to have me," she said, "and they shall get me. I will be there, never fear, and if I live I will foil them. Good God! to think of their setting on a man like Bryan to destroy him, and making use of me to carry out their purpose. Come, little mother, cheer up. Without me they are powerless to hurt him, or they would not make such a fuss about getting me, and I will foil them or I will die—*I will die.*"

She sat down and wrote her orders concerning her change of plans. The house in Merrion Square was to be opened up, and Miss O'Donovan was to accompany her to Dublin, or to remain at Crane's Castle, whichever she pleased. Miss O'Donovan elected to go to Dublin. Where a great sensation was going on, there Miss O'Donovan liked to be, and the coming trial, with all its peculiar circum-

stances, promised to be a great sensation. Miss O'Donovan had greatly improved in condition since last she had appeared in Dublin, in the character of an impoverished gentlewoman. Her wardrobe had been plentifully and elegantly replenished, and she had the use of more pocket-money than ever she had enjoyed in her life before. In and about Dublin she had hosts of friends, and she foresaw that a pleasant and exciting season was awaiting her; yet she was not at all unkind in her nature, and she liked both Bryan and Marcella.

"Miss O'Donovan will come, mother, and she will stand between us and the world, I know; that part of it will be congenial to her. She will see all dear Mrs. O'Kelly's old friends, who will come to look me up and to pay me attention, and to find out what my connection really is with this trial. She will shake her head with them and say, 'Yes, yes, *you* remember what this house was; it is sad to find it fallen into such hands; yet she is not a bad girl, only there is a taint in her blood, through her belonging, on one side, to the people; and the Kilmoreys are not quite bad either, only both mother and son are mad on one point.'"

So Marcella would talk, bustling about getting ready for the journey for Dublin, making all Mrs. Kilmorey's preparations for leaving Inisheen, while the poor little mother watched her with fascinated eyes and a frozen heart, hardly venturing to ask herself would this girl really dare to perjure herself to save Bryan? She must not be allowed to do it; she could not be suffered to do it; and yet who was to stop her if she determined to stand up in the witness-box and swear a lie? No eye saw that occurrence between them that night; it was all a secret, lying with her and him and God. If she wounded her own moral nature to set him free, who could prevent her, what should spring up to contradict her?

Then the same thought came to Mrs. Kilmorey that had crossed the mind of the terrible inquisitor of the police, that the girl would die of her sin.

"And if she did so die, and go to God to be pardoned because of the source of her sin in love, and its expiation in agony," asked the mother's hungry heart that craved for her child, "would not Bryan still be free—Bryan who was not guilty but innocent? would not the widow's son come back to her cleared of impossible guilt before the world? And there were other women to love him, as fair and as sweet as Marcella, though maybe not so terribly strong in their love. That great strength in woman was not always desirable, not always lovable in the eyes of men."

And then the unhappy mother flung up her hands and fell on her face before Heaven, and craved mercy for having dreamed such wicked dreams, and cried aloud for courage to thrust the desire for evil out of her tortured soul.

CHAPTER XIX.

WHAT THE WORLD SAID.

DUBLIN in September is as deserted as other cities in that month, and there is no life in its fashionable squares and streets, except when a horse-show or a flower-show draws a fluttering crowd of pretty faces and gay dresses from far country-houses among fields and pastures, or from near and delightful sea-side resorts along the shores of Dublin Bay.

When Miss O'Donovan had opened up Mrs. O'Kelly's old house in Merrion Square and made it comfortable for the reception of the ladies who were to follow her, she found herself almost alone in the fine square which is one of the handsomest bits of Dublin, and had to travel out to Killiney and Bray, and farther still into Wicklow County, to discuss with her acquaintances Miss O'Kelly's connection with Bryan Kilmorey and the approaching trial.

Mr. O'Flaherty and his daughter had preceded her to Dublin, and were staying at Killiney at the charming summer residence of a friend, a wealthy widow lady who was also a bosom friend of Miss O'Donovan. Here the latter lady paid one of her first visits, and her appearance was hailed with pleasure by a group of idle people assembled on a green terrace overlooking that blue bay, which is said to be like the Bay of Naples, and which many people, bitten with Erinmania, declare to be even much lovelier from certain points of view.

The steep green hill of Killiney, soaring to that furze-girdled and rock-crowned point which pierces the towering rings of silver cloud crowning it, is covered with a net-work of groves, gardens, and villas, each with its own vantage ground for the enjoyment of a view of unspeakable beauty; and under the hill, following the exquisite curves of Killiney shore, runs the living sea, palpitating beneath its veils of delicate color, blue as violets, and green as the drift weeds in a valley river, one hour tossing flame all along its shifting lines, the next overflowing its glittering boundaries with a motionless tide of molten silver and gold.

Out of the green bowers around their terrace a little crowd of prosperous people gossiped and jested, looking over at the distant hill of Howth, wrapped in its mists of rich, languorous, melancholy blue.

"I declare, here is Bride O'Donovan," said Mrs. Fitzgibbon, the mistress of the house. "How very opportune! She will tell us some news, if any one can, on the subject."

"I don't think she knows any more than we do," said Miss O'Flaherty, who had been chief authority up to this moment.

"Oh, but she is straight from Connaught, and you have been a month in Scarborough, my dear Julia. Your father, I know, is excellently well-informed, but then women always pick up scraps of gossip so much better than men; now don't they, Mr. O'Flaherty?"

Mr. O'Flaherty would have agreed that snow was falling from the daffodil-tinted sky before him if Mrs. Fitzgibbon had called upon him to do so.

"My dear Bride! Got all that tiresome house-opening business over, and not too tired to talk to your friends? I hope not, for here we are pining for a little light on this Kilmorey business. It is a real godsend to meet a person who has come from the very source of all knowledge on the subject."

Miss O'Donovan took the seat eagerly presented to her by Mr. O'Flaherty, and folded her nicely gloved hands at her ample waist, and enjoyed a moment of triumph, while not unconscious of the difficulties of her position.

She had several interests to reconcile while preserving her reputation as a person who could tell a great deal if she would. She must please her friend Mrs. Fitzgibbon—whose countenance was very precious to her just now—and also beware of alarming Mr. O'Flaherty, whose chosen ally she was, and whom she must not deprive at present of his hope that Miss O'Kelly of Crane's Castle would ultimately listen to his suit, though hitherto she had apparently discouraged it. Were this hope suddenly extinguished, he might devote himself completely to Mrs. Fitzgibbon. And he was at present wearing the blue ribbon, was a man of good position in his county, and there was no knowing what might happen; widows are so foolish.

"In the first place, how much do you want to know?" said Miss O'Donovan. "You must remember my position is a delicate one. I cannot betray anything in the nature of a confidence."

"Quite true—quite true. We only want to know what every one has a right to know," said another lady, erecting her parasol against the sun with a very decided snap of its machinery. "There are certain things that ought to be open to the public in matters of this kind. I don't hold with secret investigations."

"Everything will come out on the trial," said a sly young barrister, with the air of having thrown a good deal of light on the subject.

"Thank you, Mr. Shine. Belonging to the law naturally makes one very perspicuous," said Mrs. Fitzgibbon. "But in the mean time, until the 'whole discovery is found out,' as the newspaper-selling imps cry, we want a little help at our guesswork. Who is the mysterious lady, for instance, who has been hinted at so often in the Central News telegrams?"

"Is it true that Miss O'Kelly is or was engaged to Bryan Kilmorey?" asked a girl whose soft gray eyes were full of an interest in the matter that was not all vulgar curiosity.

"If that were so, I should certainly have known," said Miss O'Donovan. "How could I have helped knowing?" she added, ur-

gently, delighted to be able to put down this suggestion without positive breach of truth. Certainly she never had been told of any such engagement. But she had guessed its existence for all that.

"There!" said the lady with the parasol. "I knew a girl with Miss O'Kelly's advantages would never destroy herself in such a manner."

"He is very handsome," said the gray-eyed girl in a low voice. "I saw him only once, but I thought he had such a noble countenance."

"Oh, I suppose all the young ladies will take his part, like Miss Eyre, because he is good-looking, but I think that sort of sentimental sympathy with criminals is one of the most unwholesome signs of the age."

"A man is not known to be a criminal until he has been tried and found guilty," said Mr. Shine, with an approving glance at the girl with the gray eyes.

"Is he a friend of yours, Mr. Shine?" asked the owner of the parasol.

"He had once many friends," put in Mrs. Fitzgibbon. "I fear it is a bad sign when a man drops away from the society to which he was born. When he came home from travelling, some years ago, he was at a party at my house, and I thought him one of the finest young fellows I had ever seen. And his mother was so proud of him."

"Oh, you know the mother, the—the—Amazon?" lisped a small woman, who based her claim as a charmer of men on her infantile manners. "You see, Mrs. Fitzgibbon, I think these tall, masculine women are always so cruel—"

"Amazon! She is as small as you!" exclaimed Mrs. Fitzgibbon, "and much prettier and more feminine," she added, aside to her next neighbor, "though she speaks and acts like an ordinary adult."

"Really!" cried several voices.

"At present she is more like the ghost of a sick child than anything else," said Miss O'Donovan. "I believe she will weep herself to death before the trial comes on."

"Better she should," faltered an old gentleman. "When the only son of a widow turns out a rascal, it is enough to make angels weep."

"But you have not told us anything about Miss O'Kelly," said Miss Eyre. "How is she mixed up in the affair?"

"Really, I do not know that she is mixed up in it at all, except that circumstances threw her into the arms of the Kilmoreys, as it were, in the very beginning. Dear Mrs. O'Kelly's death was so sudden, and the girl, having been brought up abroad, was so utterly without friends in Ireland, had only paid one short visit to her aunt, and had gone back to finish her schooling, when she was called upon to step into Mrs. O'Kelly's place. Father Daly, the priest down at Distresna, attended Mrs. O'Kelly on her death-bed and went straight to France when all was over and brought the girl home. It appears that though he was such a friend of dear Mrs. Kelly, who was always so nice and conservative, he was also a friend of the Kilmoreys

—the country priests all do sympathize with the Nationalists, you know—"

"There was no taint of Nationalism in the Kilmoreys originally," said Mr. O'Flaherty; "I will say so much for them. All that came in with the mother, let her be an Amazon or a pygmy. She is descended from some of the Irish brigades, 'Wild Geese,' and all that sort of thing."

"It is surprising how that old continental service is still making foreigners of some of us," said the nice old gentleman.

"Great-grandfather's old French sword hanging up in the hall, you know," continued Mr. O'Flaherty. "Even old Kilmorey would point to it with pride and say, 'My wife's fortune, O'Flaherty. The only legacy ever bequeathed to her.' And he had as little nonsense about him as any one of us. He was as sensible and sociable a neighbor as ever rode to hounds."

"Or mixed a glass of whiskey-punch," said Mr. Shine, without any alteration in the gravity of his demeanor, as he fixed his eyes innocently on Mr. O'Flaherty.

"Or mixed a glass of whiskey-punch, as you say—ha! ha! A very good thing too, Mr. Shine, and a great deal better to be mixing it at home than strolling abroad preaching new doctrines to make the poor discontented with their lot, sir."

Mr. Shine smiled and felt that he was not hit. He loved neither whiskey-punch nor preaching to the poor, All his desires were covered by the dome of the Four Courts, and to get leave to talk to a judge and jury all day long was his idea of bliss. He wisely held that, if courts of justice must exist, it is better to sit with the Bar for prosecution or defence than to stand in the dock, either as a consequence of drinking too much whiskey, or of teaching strange doctrines to the poor.

"That shaft was thrown away, papa," said Miss Julia, "as we are all ladies and gentlemen here. Don't make Mr. Jones think that he has got among dangerous people;" upon which Mr. Jones, a portly iron-master whom Miss Julia had met at Scarborough, and beguiled across the Channel, began to declare that he had never been more delighted with any people in his life than the Irish as he now found them, that he had no idea—that he couldn't have conceived, etc.; the rest being for Miss Julia's ears alone.

"Then it is merely from a girlish feeling of gratitude to her first friends that Miss O'Kelly clings to the Kilmoreys," said Mrs. Fitzgibbon. "Very pretty of her, I must say, but very dreary. What must we do to save her from the unpleasant consequences of her rashness?"

"Excellent lady!" exclaimed Mr. O'Flaherty.

"How shall we approach this Donna Quixote?" asked Mrs. Fitzgibbon of Miss O'Donovan.

"I can give no advice. Miss O'Kelly is so firm in her own views, I really think it would be impossible to withdraw her from her assumed guardianship of Mrs. Kilmorey at present," said Miss O'Donovan. "However, you can come and try. She will be at Merrion Square to-morrow."

"And Mrs. Kilmorey—"

"Will also be there, to stay till the trial is over."

"The mother of the man in prison for murder. I am not sure that my enthusiasm for Miss O'Kelly will lead me so far as to connect myself with her," said Mrs. Fitzgibbon, slowly. "One must think of what would be said."

Mr. O'Flaherty's jaw fell.

"I—I—I—think it would be kind," he murmured.

"Now, papa, you see I was right," said Julia. "You wanted me to go, and I thought whatever might be done in the country we should have to be careful here. How would you like to see yourself spoken of in the papers as a sympathizer with crime?"

"It would be no use, at any rate," said Miss Eyre to Mr. Shine, who had edged himself near her in the course of the conversation. "I believe that girl will stick to her post. I met her several times, at last St. Patrick's ball, and at Mrs. O'Kelly's. There was something about her I can't describe. Did you know her?"

"Like you, I have just met her. I am not as romantic as you, but I thought she had character in her face."

"It is a dreadful tragedy. *Do* you think he did it, Mr. Shine?"

"I am junior counsel for the prosecution, Miss Eyre, so what can I think? I believe at all events that you have jumped to the right conclusion in deciding that Miss O'Kelly will stand by the Kilmoreys. She is too deeply concerned with them to dream of such a thing as deserting them."

"You know more about it all than we do."

"A little."

So it was that nobody of importance called on Miss O'Kelly when she arrived for the first time in Dublin to inhabit her house in Merrion Square, and this state of things was not much of a surprise, but a great relief to Marcella, who had nerved herself to encounter questions, condolences, and counsels from people who knew nothing about her affairs. She had brought Miss O'Donovan to Dublin to stand between her and much of this kind of thing; but in order to show she was not afraid of it, she had insisted upon taking up her abode in her own house, prominent as it was in situation, and had placed flowers on her window-sills, and hung fresh curtains in her windows, that the world might see no trace of the terror in her heart, might not suspect her of feeling the slightest fear of the result of the trial of Bryan Kilmorey. For this reason she had refrained from following her impulse to take quiet lodgings near the prison of Kilmainham, out of sight and hearing of the world, thus putting the smallest possible space between the prisoner and those whose constant thoughts were with him. She would not hang back in the shade as if she were conscious that they had reason to be ashamed of him. Nevertheless, she was thankful that the world left her unmolested, and never troubled herself about the tales that were told and the speculations indulged in when Miss O'Donovan went to pay her daily visits to her fashionable friends out of town.

The shock of the first unhappy visit to Bryan being over, Marcella looked round for some means of passing the dreadful hours from every morning till every night, and from the beginning of one week till the beginning of another. In presence of his mother and a warder, she dared not speak to him fully of the terrible visitor at Inisheen. The matter was alluded to, and she simply stated that strange questions had been asked her, to which she had, of course, returned an absolute denial. Bryan had turned pale as she spoke, and made an exclamation. She had glanced at the warder and then at him imploringly; and Kilmorey said no more, and so the matter passed. That was on the occasion of their first visit, hers and his mother's, to his prison-cell. What could be said with a warder standing near, within ear-shot of every word that was spoken? The mother's affliction called for all Marcella's care and attention, and the visit was a short agony, the poor little mother being carried back to the carriage in a fainting condition. No one could see the prisoner again for a certain number of days, and meantime Marcella had another visit from Mr. O'Malley at her house, and again denied that she had ever hidden or harbored the prisoner, or seen him at all before the night of the St. Patrick's ball. While she was saying the false words she felt his eyes looking through her as they had done before, and knew that hers had acknowledged her guilt to him a hundred times in the course of the interview. But what did that signify so long as she would not speak?

It was the morning after that first visit to Bryan that she had again seen and foiled O'Malley, and after he was gone she felt that she must secure some distraction for her thoughts, or lose her mind. Leaving Mrs. Kilmorey slumbering in a state of reaction from the tension of yesterday's excitement, she took Bridget, the old housekeeper, whom she had brought to town to stand between her and the Dublin servants, as she had brought Miss O'Donovan to stand between her and the Dublin gentry, and muffled in a close black bonnet, veil, and cloak, went to take a walk through the part of the city she knew so well, to have another look at the old street, the old house, the spot where she had first met Bryan, and where she was going to swear she had never met him. She need not be afraid now of any one who knew her meeting and recognizing her. She had been tracked and traced, and was soon to appear before the world as Marcella Grace, her father's daughter, the girl who had sewed for her living in the Liberties. That story of her foreign rearing, so ingeniously set on foot by poor Mrs. O'Kelly, was soon to be blown to the winds. She would stand in the witness-box as a girl who had pretended to be what she was not, and deceived her little world, and perhaps might therefore be open to suspicion as a credible witness. Well, in that matter at least, she had not intended to deceive any one. Mrs. O'Kelly had set the story on foot, and she had not ventured to contradict it in any large way, that was all. She had not thought much about it; it would have pleased her better to have informed every one of the exact state of her circumstances. But now, as to being a credible witness; she shuddered and walked faster to drive

away the dreadful thought that pursued her wherever she turned—the thought that she was now a liar, and was going to be a perjurer. She felt a vague wonder as she walked, so fast that poor old Bridget could scarcely keep pace with her, as to what Father Daly would say to her, how she was going to live under his eye when he came to understand what she was doing. She knew she would not be able to deceive him, any more than she had been able to deceive the mother. Dearly as she loved Bryan, he could not have the mother's instinct which tempted her to permit sin that justice might be had for her son. He would urge, preach, scold, put her under a ban, but she would be firm. They should not hang Bryan on words coming from her lips, not though—Oh, God! that she could stop this thinking—Ay, here they were coming into Patrick's Close, and the old ground was near at hand. There was the tower of Patrick's lifting its dark body at the foot of the descending street. Here was the low-lying Coombe (vale), which she had traversed many times dreaming of six-pences and shillings earned, and half-crowns hard to earn. Now she had money to throw to any poor girl who might be passing by with starved eyes that saw nothing but the struggle for existence; yet what was this horror of sin that had come into her life? Sin: was it sin? Sin to refuse to murder Bryan Kilmorey with her own hand that had once been so proud of having saved him?

"That is the house I want to go into, Bridget. I once knew some poor people who lived in it. I wish to ask about them."

There stood the old house at the corner of Weaver's Square, seeming more dingy, old, and battered even than it had looked six months ago. It appeared forlorn, deserted; she could not tell whether it was inhabited or not. This woman with the shawl over her head coming down the street might be able to tell her. Oh yes, the woman could tell her anything she wanted to know about that very house.

"The key is kep' in the next neighbor's, ma'am, an' that's meself, and ready enough; but sure it's not much of a place for the likes of you to go into. (Patsie! bring out the big key!) Nobody lives in it since ould Grace the weaver died, and the lan'lord doesn't find it so easy to set it in tinimints, miss, because of the holes in the stairs, and that. An' he doesn't want to spend money on it, because people do be sayin' that it's clane pulled down it'll be next year by the sanitary gintlemen. Sure there's great improvements entirely goin' on; and look at Guinness's buildin's! They may say what they like, callin' them that lives in them *Guinness's flats*, but meself thinks they're sharp enough afther their own comfort that takes to them. Now, ma'am, here's the key comin', and you can take a walk through the ould house; only mind the holes!"

In at the old familiar door again, and up the well-known stairs. Here was where Bryan stood when he told her, with his straight stern glance, that he had done nothing wrong. There on the landing she had waited while the police searched the house. Here her poor father had stood while he unfolded the newspaper that told of a murder in the streets; and now for the crazy room where she had put Bryan into hiding.

"There's nothing particular about the place, ma'am, ye see, except it be that ould closet. Sure ye'd niver see the door of it in the wood only I showed it to you. It's a sort of a black hole. God knows what it was put there for; but the police have got an eye on it this while back—somethin' about a murder that was done in the street—and I'm tould that they suspect it's in there the man was murdered; but whether he was shut up in it till he was starved, or whether he was knocked on the head, I couldn't rightly tell you. I'm only a matter of a month in the street meself; but there's Mrs. Casey, a neighbor of mine, says it couldn't 'a' been in ould Grace's time, because he was a dacent crature, and besides, she would ha' knowed. Anyhow, there' somethin' goin' on about it, an' if Mrs. Casey 'd been here she'd ha' tould you the whole thing; but I niver had a head meself for the rights of a story. If you'd like to wait a bit, ma'am, Mrs. Casey 'll be in at three; an' if ye'd sit down in my own poor little place till she comes, I'll dust the best chair for ye."

"Oh no, thank you greatly," said Marcella, who had no wish to be confronted with Mrs. Casey, the woman who had come for her to Mrs. O'Kelly's that night when she had hurried home after the ball to her father's death-bed. Another time she would be pleased to see the kind old neighbor, but she felt that at sight of her now she must break down. She felt as eager to be gone as she had been an hour ago to make her way to this spot; and summoning Bridget, she hastened out of the street, nor thought of where she was going till she found herself pausing before the entrance into the shabby old church where, as child and girl, she had prayed.

She stood at the gate a few moments, looking up as if at a strange building. Had she ever noticed in the old time those two large keys carved in the stone-work—Peter's keys, she knew—the keys of heaven? They looked now as if they had been crossed, like bars, to shut the sinner out beyond the gate they guarded. And yet she would dare to go in, she would not be thrust out.

"Sure, miss, it's an ugly ould chapel; there's far purtier ones all round the city," whispered Bridget, to whom this was a sight-seeing expedition. But she followed the young lady into the church, and dropped on her knees in a corner and pulled out her beads, while Marcella walked slowly, with bowed head and eyelids scarcely raised up the old familiar nave, and knelt down on one of the worm-eaten benches, and remembered her old sorrows and struggles and fears, and thought of them as bliss compared with the agony through which she was living now. Then she could pray, and depart comforted. Now she dared not pray, and there was no comfort for the obstinate sinner. Slowly her gaze moved round the walls, following along that Way of the Cross which in other days her feet had travelled with childlike faith and unreasoning hope. Why had faith and hope departed from her now? Why could she no longer travel that Way of the Cross on her knees as she had done on the morning after she had first succored him, offering her prayers for him, and leaving him safe in the hands of a God who knew all his difficulty? Why? Because she had sinned for him, and was going to sin more deeply

for his sake. Because she had allowed his life to become dearer to her than her soul. How should God be with her in this struggle when she had shut her lips to prayer and opened them to perjury? With Bryan safe and well by her side, could she evermore dare to pray? Would not God cut her off for all eternity? Would not Bryan himself learn to hate her for her crime? And yet to hang Bryan with her own hand, to lift up her voice and give the signal for the murder of her love! She could not do it. Even with the dear Christ turning his dying eyes on her from yonder Cross, she could not promise to think of it. A blinding conviction that she was lost, body and soul, ruined before God and man, smote her like the blow of a mailed fist, and a death-like faintness seized her brain, her senses.

The church was empty now of all but the two women, and in her distant corner Bridget heard a faint cry as Marcella called on the name of the Saviour, and slipped away off her knees upon the narrow floor between the benches, where the old servant presently found her, lying stiff and cold in a swoon.

CHAPTER XX.

THOU SHALT NOT BEAR FALSE WITNESS.

THE morning after her walk through the city with Bridget, Marcella received a message in her room that a gentleman requested an interview with her on business. Expecting another encounter with Mr. O'Malley, she went slowly down-stairs, trembling, but with head erect, and entered the study, looking more like a ghost than a mortal woman. However, the visitor proved to be Bryan's solicitor, not the chief of the police.

His errand was to tell her that Mr. Kilmorey wished to see her alone. Not even his mother was to be present at the meeting, virtually not even the warder, who could be relied on to keep sufficiently at a distance to allow of a private conversation. Mr. Kilmorey had something very important to say to Miss O'Kelly.

She lost no time, but set out at once for Kilmainham with Bridget.

Dismissing her conveyance at the gate of the Old Men's Hospital, she walked through that peaceful enclosure of ancient walls and green lawns and alleys, and saw the aged pensioners sitting in the sun, or doing a bit of gardening, or tottering up and down under the trees, stick in hand, enjoying the balmy summer air and the feeble conceits of their own tranquil and over-weary brains. Death could not be far away from some of these; but they were ripe to go, must be ready, and were, maybe, eager for a renewal of the youth which had long ago been drained out of their veins. But Bryan. O God! which of these old men, so carefully nurtured here, had in the whole space of his long life done one-third of the service to his fellow-men which Bryan had accomplished in his shorter span? And yet they

wanted to thrust him out of the world, to put him to death as a malefactor who could not, for the safety of others, be suffered to enjoy the light of the sun! Travelling through a long, green lane of shade under high arching trees, an ideal summer walk for coolness and peace, she emerged suddenly from under an ancient archway upon the high-road of Kilmainham, and saw the prison staring her in the face.

Oh that cruel front of granite and iron, those envious barred windows and bitter gates! How many a savage injustice had been wrought behind them!—how often had the innocent herded with murderers and gone to the scaffold branded with guilt, while the informer, with blood-stained hands and blood-guilty heart, came forth into the light of heaven, and heard the birds sing once more in the blue air, and saw the flowers bloom again on the green! After a great ringing of bells, rattling of keys, and clanging of gates, the two women, having satisfactorily answered the questions put to them, were admitted to the inner precincts of the prison.

The key grated in the lock of Bryan's cell, the door was thrown open, and she saw him. The warder said, respectfully, "When you want to get out, miss, you can tap at the door—I'll be just outside; not rightly outside, I mean, but *out of hearing.*" And the man, who was from Kilmorey's county, whose father was still a tenant of Kilmorey's, and whose sympathies were with the prisoner, closed the door behind him, where he stood on the threshold, and left the prisoner and his visitor to all intents and purposes alone. And that they might be reassured on the subject of his deafness to their conversation, he whistled softly between his teeth the tune of the "Wearing o' the Green" during the entire duration of the interview.

Within the narrow limits of four cold stone walls, whose unbroken whiteness made the eyes ache and swim, she saw Bryan stretching out his hands to draw her towards him, and the first conscious thought in her mind, as she stood for a moment silently looking at him, was that she had never seen his gray eyes look so blue under the shadow of his grave brows; that they were as blue as a child's eyes, or as the lake of Inisheen. Then there were a few minutes of inevitable and immeasurable joy for both which all the impending horrors of the future could not kill, while they stood hand-in-hand, seeing no prison walls, only the purple hills, and the flying clouds, and the laughing sea around them, till the tragedy of their lives stalked at last between and put them asunder, and they sat gazing at each other dumbly across its presence.

When the little flush of gladness had faded away from her young face, he saw how hollow her cheeks had grown, how pale her lips, and noticed the dark shadows that had settled round her eyes. Even the half-starved Marcella of the Liberties never looked so great a wreck as this.

"My love," he said, "you have been killing yourself. You will not leave me a chance for my own life. If you drop into your grave before even the trial comes on, what have I to live for?"

"For your mother, for yourself, perhaps for some other woman,

who will love you more wisely than I know how to do. I do not care, so that I am spent in saving you."

"There could be no other woman for me in such a case. There is no other for me in any case. You are my beginning and my end. If you waste yourself away, I shall be left solitary."

Marcella smiled a little, chiefly for the hope that underlay his speech.

"You see I am determined to live," he went on, smiling to see her smile, "and you must not refuse to live also, unless you are anxious to give me over to that other woman."

She tightened her clasp on his hand, to which she was holding as if she felt death already trying to undo her grip.

"Dear, I have asked you to come that we may talk about this. It is not altogether fear for me that is killing you, Marcella, for I know how brave you are—I have reason to know it. There is something else that is gnawing your life away. Dearest, it is that falsehood, which we must have done with."

Marcella's face drooped to her breast, and her attempt to speak ended in a faint muttering. She withdrew her hand from his, locked her own together, and sat silent.

"Speak, Marcella; say something to me!"

She raised her head again, and looked at him with a look of suffering that seemed to see him afar off, and as if not belonging to her.

"You have nothing to do with that," she said. "It is my own affair."

"How is it not my affair? Are your truth and your falsehood not my affair, especially when they are to affect, or intended to affect, my fate?"

"My conscience is my own, like my life. I hold both in my hand. Even you cannot make me speak if I choose to be silent, nor make me live if I am to die."

He breathed a hard sigh, and looked at her as she sat with her locked hands, as if mutely pleading before the bar of a judgment from which she expected no mercy; and he noted her pale, sharpened, young features, the strung mouth, the dark locks uncurled by the dew of agony lying heavy upon her brow, the eyes large and strange with woe, startled out of their habitual softness by a horror always confronting them.

"My dearest, dearest love, give me those little fierce hands; they look as if they were locked against me as fast as the prison gates; let me hold them while I talk to you. What! are you angry at me, or afraid of me, because you think I am going to say something hard? You know you cannot live and breathe without knowing every moment that I love you. My love for you is beyond what is common among men. I am not a man who loves a woman every year, or every five, or every ten years. As I said before, you are the whole of woman's love to me; and I felt it the first moment I looked at you, felt it without knowing it when I saw you standing, pitying and protecting me in that old room in the Liberties—me, who felt

all unneedful of pity—do not start and look over your shoulder; no one hears now, but all the world must soon hear—and felt it again more consciously when I met your eyes in the crowd that other night at the top of the staircase in the Castle. Since then you have grown round the very roots of my heart. Every hair of your bonny head is precious to me, every movement of your lips is sweet; the beauty of your eyes and their tenderness make my delight. You are everything to me, short of nothing but only my honor and my soul; or rather the highest part of my love for you is bound up with my honor and my soul. Give me your hands, sweetest love, and let me hold them fast while I say the rest of what I have to say to you. It is hard to say, and hard to hear, but it must be said. In this I am stronger than you, as I ought to be; for I am the man, and I must be the master. Your will must be my will if you love me at all, and so—Marcella, you must not commit perjury!"

She sat quite still and unmoved; her hands lay limp in his strong grasp; she would not even raise her eyes to see the passion of pleading in his gaze. She knew his love without telling, yet the outpouring of it would have been an exquisite delight to her at any other moment. Now the sweetness was like music heard a long way too far off, or like excessive fragrant perfume scattered by a fierce wind. All of it that touched her sounded like the wooing of a love that wooed them both to death. She could not open her heart to it.

"Marcella, lift up your dear eyes and look me in the face."

She raised them with the same wild, piteous gaze she had turned towards the dying Christ on the cross in the church; only her eyes ventured to look this man in the face, who was only man, however godlike he seemed to her, while they had not dared to rise higher than the pierced feet of the pitiful Redeemer of men.

"We must not endure sin. You and I, who are one in heart and mind, will not commit crime to prove our innocence. I am innocent now; what should I be if I were to buy my life with perjury, any one's perjury, let alone yours? We must not stand up before God and man and deny the truth."

"I have already denied it," said Marcella, quickly, and withdrew away from him a little as if she felt herself unworthy to be so near him, and would run before her sentence to meet her punishment.

"I know it, and that is why I made efforts to talk to you alone on this subject. You will not do it again?"

She stood up straight before him with a resolute movement; but her eyes faltered away from his again, and she fixed them blankly on the blinding white wall.

"What is truth?" she said, with suppressed vehemence. "The truth is that you are innocent. Why should I tell a story that will make you appear guilty—the story of a wretched accident which will seem to mean every false thing that your enemies desire? You told me yourself that it would be, if known, the strongest corroborative evidence against you. Mr. O'Malley thinks so, I know by the way he hungers for it. I have intelligence enough myself to see

that it would ruin you. And you—you would have death from my hand—but you shall not have it. Leave me with my sin to God. When all is over, he will deal with me."

"When all is over?"

"When you are saved and free."

"And you?"

She looked in his face, and her heart, with all its fiery eagerness, grew suddenly cold. She had expected that look she now thought she saw, dreamed of it, cried out against it, nerved herself to bear it; but now she had confronted it, she felt it to be her death-warrant.

"Me?" she said, faintly. "I shall have then passed out of your life forever. I have felt from the first that you could not love a wicked woman, a woman who could lie even to save you. I think I saw that on your stern brows even the first moment I looked at you. I did not know then what it was that I saw, but now I know. After I have saved you by my sin, I shall have lost you. Have I not said that God would have power to deal with me?"

She turned her face to the wall with a movement of utter forlornness, and leaned her forehead against the stone.

Bryan stood silent a moment gazing at her, and then went to her and drew her towards him.

"Love, love, you are talking wildly. Unless death takes one of us, our lives can never pass away from each other. Even in eternity I do not feel that we can be separated. All the more reason that I will not endure this sin. You cannot take it upon yourself, giving me, after having benefited by it, liberty to fling you away from my more rigid virtue because of the stain of it on your conscience. And yet you and I could have no peace with the shadow of it forever lying between us. We are both too keenly alive to the beauty and harmony of life regulated by the moral law to be able to smile in each other's faces, while conscious of having gained our happiness by so hideous a lapse from it. You are sick now with sorrow; your brain is overwrought; you are a little mad with your passion for self-sacrifice; quite blinded by your thrice-blessed tenderness and sweet concern for me. But just give up this struggle, and trust yourself to my guidance. We will weather this storm together, but we will have the truth on our side. Look up at me, and see now if my brows are stern. Oh, love, love, love, would to God I could shelter you from this anguish that my rashness has brought upon you!"

Marcella's dry-eyed madness suddenly gave way, a rain of tears drenched her face, and she wept tempestuously on his shoulder.

"Darling, you will promise to obey me?"

"O God, I cannot!"

He waited a few moments and let her weep her passion out, and meanwhile the warder's whistling of the "Wearing o' the Green" outside the scarce-closed door, filled the silence across her sobbing.

"You will give me your word that you will speak the truth?"

Her tears ceased and a long shudder shook her.

"Why, oh, why did you come to me on that hateful night, only that I might be your ruin?"

"Only that your love might be the crown of my life. Had they arrested me before I reached your door, the plot against me would have been developed a little sooner, that is all, and I should have died, if I am to die, without having known the highest joy of living. But, my dear, it has not been made certain yet that I am to die. The truth on our side, we will fight the matter out with courage."

"My courage is all dead."

"No, it is not dead, it has only swooned with too much horror. If it were dead I should be left a forlorn and disappointed man to do battle alone. But if I know you at all, you will not desert me."

"I will not desert you."

"Then give me your word. Say, on the day when I am called on to stand up before the world and speak, 'I will not bear false witness.'"

"O God, O pitiful God!"

"Yes, dear, there is a God, and he is pitiful. Say the words I have put to you, 'I will not bear false witness.'"

"I will not bear false witness," said Marcella, mechanically.

"That is my brave darling. And, Marcella, sweetheart, listen to me, for we have only a few minutes more to be alone, remember that on your courage in that moment much may depend for us. Truth is great, and innocence ought to be brave."

"If I am there, I will be brave. My bearing shall not do you wrong," and she thought as she spoke that perhaps she should not be there, might be dead in the mercy of Heaven before that unimaginable hour should arrive.

"I am sure of it. And now, sweetest, truest, and dearest, you must leave me. The warder has given the signal that time is up," said Kilmorey, as the piping of the pathetic melody which had twined itself all through their conversation suddenly ceased, and Bridget's stoutly shod feet could be heard upon the flags outside the door. And Marcella, stunned with the weight of the pledge she had given, allowed herself to be dismissed and led away.

After she was gone Kilmorey sat looking at the spot where she had stood, thinking more of the love that had so strongly resisted him than of the victory he had won or its consequences. He had long ago thought out his case thoroughly, and made up his mind to the worst. By nature he was singularly brave, only needing to know the worth of his aim, and taking no heed to count the cost of effort; possessing all the daring qualities of the Irishman born to be a soldier, but qualified for daily uses by the thoughtful reasoning of the philosopher. The development, more or less full, of whatever high purpose a man might put before him, had always seemed to him the chief reason for a thinking man's existence, and he had easily perceived that in any onward or upward struggle of the masses there must always be a pile of slain on which others pressing forward can mount to clear the breach. If the lot to fall had been cast for him, why, let him take it, and go down like a man.

This, a year ago, had been his attitude clearly cut against the horizon of his future, and the order to march, as he put it to himself, would have found him ready, with few weakening regrets beyond those which were inevitably linked with the suffering of his mother.

But as he now sat meditating in his cell, he was cruelly aware that, in the last six months, life, mere personal life, had gained a sweetness and a rich vigor for him never known before. Existence had taken the colors of a poet's dream ; the beauty which still walketh on the earth and air had captivated his senses; the light that never was on sea or shore had fallen on his path; his heart had flowered into a love that craved for all that human happiness which he had only thought of before as the impediment and hinderance of weaker men. As he sat on his prison-bed, his elbow on his knee, his head on his hand, and looked for an hour—time is not precious in a prison-cell—at that spot of the floor where Marcella's feet had rested, he acknowledged that it were keenly sweet to live, and that the victory he had so hardly gained over the madness of a woman's love, strong in her weakness to do wrong for his sake, was a terrible victory, the crown of which burned his brows with a torturing flame.

He still felt the touch of her hand on his; the light of her face shone on him; it seemed as if her breath still made sweet the air of this small chill square of all space into which his manhood was cramped. She was gone out into the sunshine of the autumn world like a crushed flower, and there was only that door, a little wood and iron, to keep him from following her with reviving joy in his gift. If he could but pass that door, what a life they might lead in some country untouched by the curse that blighted all effort for good in Ireland! They two, under some rare blue ridge of Switzerland, or in some ripe wild garden of Italy, or cool, picturesque court of sunny Spain; they two, hand-in-hand, and heart to heart, in harmony with all beautiful things, thankful and worshipful towards Heaven, enjoying with passion the beauties and the sweetnesses of life, leaving behind them all effort to do good, here so thankless and cruelly repaid, and only life, life, life in their full hands, to expend upon one another through all the fruitful teeming years.

The strong man crushed his hands together in an ecstasy of suffering, to think that all this might have been, and never now could be, his. In this hour of his temptation all his old generous theories had left him. To die for the good of many did not seem so right to him as to live for the good of one—of two. To die? To be thrust out from the light of the sun, the swell of the sea, the rush of the air, out of all further knowledge of his love, blotted from her face, deaf to her call, cut off forever beyond her reach; no cries, no answers, no faintest echo of sympathy between them throughout the whole universe for evermore; to have but tasted the first drops of living happiness, and have the cup dashed down and broken; this, and not the knotting of the disgraceful cord, or nature's resisting throe in yielding up the ghost, was death.

And what was life that he should be counted unworthy to hold

it, the common gift shared by the commonest thing that stirred in the sun? Life, liberty; the fly that buzzed in through the small aperture half-way up the smooth white wall above his head, and buzzed out again, had both. As he followed its coming and going with interest, he fell to musing on the wonderful beauty of life, mere life, as part of a living universe. He thought of the eagle on the mountain at Inisheen, and the thrush in the garden at Crane's Castle, and the happy wild gull riding the waves; and then his mind's eye looked lower, to the rabbit scampering in the heather, the butterfly wheeling her painted wings on the air, the darting bat and humming night-moth; even the snail creeping out at will from under lush leaves after the rain grew to be a miracle of free enjoyment as he pondered on its happy existence. Remorsefully he thought of how his gun had often brought down the glad wild birds from their soaring delight to cruel annihilation, and hated himself for such murder. God had given, and God alone should take away, the life of a happy sentient being.

He looked at his own hand, the strong right hand of man, the full throbbing veins, the fine tingling nerves, the thrilling fingers, exquisitely adapted for a thousand uses. This, too, was destined to be limp and cold, to whiten, and then to rot.

The cell had grown quite dark, though outside in the wide fields round Kilmainham the autumn twilight lingered, when a bird, belated by some chance on its way home to woods farther out into the country, perched on the bar of the high prison window and began to sing his even-song.

What is it in the song of a bird that suggests immortality? As the prisoner listened, the despair of his soul gave way, and that thought thrilled through him expressed by King David in the words, "I remembered God, and I was delighted."

When the bird had finished and flown away, Kilmorey drew his hand across his eyes, and was not ashamed of a tear only known to himself and an unseen Heaven.

CHAPTER XXI.

IN THE DOCK.

AUTUMN, so bewitching in Ireland, with the rare violets of morning and evening mists, the dewy brilliance of its foliage under heavens of tender gray, and its late bird-songs, had disappeared behind the verge of winter, and the shortening and darkening days had brought the gentry of Dublin back to squares and streets, out of the neighboring country. The approaching trials of the men in prison for the murder of Mr. Ffont were looked forward to as something sensational in the way of trials by such people (who are to be found in every community) as take a morbid pleasure in events of the kind. In this case the fact that a gentleman was one of the ac-

cused enhanced the general interest in the matter, and genteel Dublin had something to talk about while it cleaned its windows—a happy feat, in general too rarely accomplished—and hung up its lace curtains, and did not arrange its window flower-boxes, because genteel Dublin despises the graceful custom cherished elsewhere as one of the fairest signs of civilized living, that of clothing the grim stonework of its window-sills with a little fringe of bloom. The reason is difficult to seek, in a sentimental and beauty-loving population. Poverty has been pleaded as an apology for the dark, gaunt exterior of our dwellings, yet how easily a few shillings or pounds are spent on some tawdry delight. In poorer homes on the outskirts of the city, sometimes even in wretched lanes, one sees windowfuls of flowers; but the mansions of the upper ten remain guiltless of such frivolity. An exception here and there proves the rule; and one blesses the individual who breaks the grim law which says, "Thy dwelling, if respectable, must be dingy and unlovely," and flings out a handful of beauty to gladden the eye of the passer-by.

The long interval of weeks between the autumn day when Bryan had striven with the madness in her, and conquered, and the time appointed for the trial had been a great part spent by Marcella on a bed of fever, from which she had risen stronger and calmer in mind, if shattered in body. As soon as the crisis of the illness was past, and her mind was delivered from delirium, her evidence had been given from her sick-bed—that damning evidence against Kilmorey which she had hoped death might have enabled her to withhold. She had not died, however, and now that the worst she could do had been done, the next best thing to dying with her cruel tale untold was to grow strong and help him to fight out his battle to the bitter end. This she set herself to accomplish in as far as was possible, that she might not, through faltering and weakness, disgrace him and herself by a seeming consciousness of guilt in him.

Early in December the trials opened in the old court-house in Green Street, situated among the slums on the north side of the city. Before Kilmorey's turn arrived two men, Fenians, were tried, also for the murder of Mr. Ffont, and were convicted without difficulty and sentenced to death. Two others of the same band had saved their lives by offering to inform on Kilmorey, and were to be produced on his trial as chief evidence against him. And one rainy, miserable morning an immense crowd, fashionable and unfashionable, men and women, thronged the dingy court-house to suffocation, for the pleasure, pain, or curiosity of seeing Bryan Kilmorey take his stand in the dock

There were two judges on the bench: one small, keen, gray-featured, unpopular, with a reputation for inhuman eagerness to convict; the other large, placid, deprecating, with an indescribable expression in his eyebrow, which somehow conveyed the idea to the wretches who hung upon his looks and words that he would always be willing to save a prisoner when he could, and that to pronounce a hard sentence almost gave him his death-blow. To Marcella, sitting veiled in black in a corner of the court, they both looked, in their long

gray wigs and ermines, simply wolves in sheep's clothing, and nothing more.

Miss O'Donovan sat beside Marcella, and exchanged greetings with her fashionable friends, whose eye-glasses were often levelled at the pale face of the heiress of Distresna. It was decided that Miss O'Kelly made an unnecessary display of her interest in the prisoner, unless, indeed, she were engaged to him, as had been rumored, only that seemed too absurd to be true. No girl would engage herself to a man on his trial for murder—at least no girl like this, with the world at her feet. However, sitting there, with her drooped eyelids, raised only at times in the direction of the prisoner, or for a swift, proud, wide-eyed glance round the crowded court, she made a point of keen interest in the drama—the more so as the part she played was not at all clearly understood.

The prisoner stood in the dock, slightly leaning forward, with his arms folded and resting on the bench in front of him. Except for traces of mental suffering in the dark shadows about his eyes, he looked well, with the air of a man who knew how to be brave in adversity.

Sergeant Fitzgerald opened the case for the prosecution with a grave reference to the position of the prisoner at the bar as a gentleman and land-owner, and spoke of his late father as one whom many remembered and esteemed for his genial and social qualities. He himself (Sergeant Fitzgerald) had known the late Mr. Kilmorey, and was thankful that his old friend was not alive to see this melancholy day. After hasty but effective use of a white pocket-handkerchief, the learned counsel proceeded to state the circumstances arrayed against Bryan Kilmorey, showing him to be guilty of the murder of his fellow-man, and, still worse, his fellow-landlord: "It was not all in a day that this young man had quitted honest ways and wandered into paths of abysmal darkness and crime. Though the son of a father who had been content to live peaceably on his estate, and take things as he found them, Bryan Kilmorey had early shown proclivities leading him to evil companionship and disreputable practices. While still a mere youth he had joined the Fenian society, and had stolen from his father's house at night to learn the use of fire-arms for wicked purposes, drilling with some of the lowest of the population in secret recesses of his native mountains.

"His evil courses being discovered by his father, he was sent to a university, thus getting a chance to put himself straight, a chance which does not come in the way of all youthful wrong-doers. However, though it must be acknowledged that while at college Kilmorey distinguished himself and won good opinions, socially as well as intellectually, yet so deeply did the dark stain which had early appeared in him run through all his actions that, on his return to Ireland after a lapse of some years, we find him renewing his connection with Fenianism, and identifying himself with so-called Nationalists in politics. Yet he had learned caution; and so carefully did he proceed that but little evidence exists of the communication which since that time he has undoubtedly carried on with the lead-

ers of communism and socialism. One, however, will presently appear in the witness-box who will make startling revelations on this point.

"After his respected and lamented father's death, Bryan Kilmorey quitted the respectable roof under which he had been reared, and, leaving it to ruin and decay, withdrew himself from all the pleasant social ways of his neighbors and old friends, and burrowed, if I may be permitted to use the expression, in a rude dwelling among the barren rocks of a small island, mysteriously placed, as if intended by Nature for the home of a pirate or conspirator, in the waters of a lonely lake among the mountains of Connemara. Why he deserted the open highways of the world and preferred to hide himself in this savage dwelling will presently be seen. His father's wealth disappeared; it was not spent upon himself, nor upon that unhappy lady, his mother, who had followed him, with a mother's devotion, to his unnatural lurking-place. It had disappeared into the coffers of the secret societies to encourage the manufacture of dynamite, to purchase the secret gun for the skulking murderer, to fee the wretch who lies in wait for his victim behind the—the—the aroma of the flowering hedge-rows!

"But the secret society whose oath he had taken, to obey whose orders he had pledged himself, is not satisfied with any one particular service from its votaries, but must have all it demands, and at the moment when it chooses to make its demand. It was decreed by the iniquitous councils of such a society that Mr. Gerald Ffrench Ffont was to die, and the lot to personally conduct, if I may use a modern phrase, this atrocious murder fell upon Mr. Bryan Kilmorey. That he did not attempt to shirk this awful responsibility I think we shall be able to prove. That he cunningly took every precaution to hide his guilty part in the transaction will also be made plain in this court. The deed was not done in the country, where Kilmorey was known by appearance to every one, but in the crowded slums of the city of Dublin, where his escape from detection was more likely to be assured. On a dark winter's night Mr. Ffont's steps were dogged, and he was cruelly done to death by a band of assassins, four of whom were seized, while one, the ringleader, was known to have mysteriously escaped."

Counsel then went on to describe the flight of Kilmorey, and the search made for him by the police in a house where he had taken refuge—a search which proved fruitless, in consequence, as it would be seen, of the circumstance that a secret closet existed in that house, and also thanks to the skill and devotion of friends of the fugitive, who were then dwelling in that house.

"But the sword of justice, parried though it may be for a time by the—the spasmodic efforts of treachery and guilt, will in time, providentially, find its way home at last," continued the learned sergeant. "Some one has aptly said, 'though the mills of God grind slowly, yet they grind exceeding small,' and so, after almost a year of delay and difficulty, the chain of evidence against this unhappy young man is complete. Evidence to corroborate the story which the in-

formers have got to tell will not be found wanting, and proof the most conclusive of his guilt is about to be laid before this court and the world."

The above slight sketch gives but a faint idea of the length, force, and conclusiveness of the story told by Sergeant Fitzgerald in opening the case for the prosecution. His words were listened to with breathless interest, and the general feeling in court when he sat down was that no attempt from the other side could do away with the effect of such an indictment. The voice of the accuser, raised as much in sorrow as in anger, broken with emotion, or swelling with righteous wrath, was in itself a powerful engine of the outraged law. That the old friend of the prisoner's father should find himself obliged to arraign and condemn the erring son seemed in itself overwhelming testimony of the guilt of the accused.

A considerable number of witnesses were called for the prosecution, besides the Fenian informers, who gave evidence to prove the truth of some of Sergeant Fitzgerald's statements. It was true that young Kilmorey had become a Fenian at sixteen years of age; true that his father had done all in his power to break the dangerous connection his son had formed; equally true that the late Mr. Kilmorey had been quite unable to accomplish this object, and had, in consequence, died of a broken heart. All this was triumphantly proved by Fenian as well as other testimony, and who should know better than the Fenians themselves? The counsel for the defence did not make any attempt to shake the evidence of the prisoner's early Fenianism, though a few telling points were elicited in cross-examination as to the habits of Mr. Kilmorey, senior, and the cause of his death; but the informer who witnessed to the prisoner's intercourse with the heads of secret societies, and the renewal of his allegiance to Fenianism in its more modern and deadly form, after the father's death and the arrival of the younger man at years of maturity, was somewhat roughly shaken by the prisoner's counsel.

And then, towards the close of the first day's proceedings, the plot thickened, and the witnesses for the prosecution who could tell the tale of what occurred on the night of the murder of Gerald Ffrench Ffont, having been concerned in the affair themselves, and gained their pardon by turning Queen's evidence, were put in the witness-box, one after the other, and their examination and cross-examination had not come to an end when the court was under necessity of rising for that evening.

According to their story, Mr. Ffont, who had been a hard man as well as a bad landlord, having fairly earned by his inhuman conduct the detestation of the people living at his mercy, had been tried, found guilty, and sentenced to death by the society which sits in judgment on such tyrants. The lot to conduct the murder, and see that it was properly carried out, had fallen upon Mr. Bryan Kilmorey, and he was bound by his oath to obey orders. On the night of the murder he was on the spot, and gave the signal to fire on Mr. Ffont. The police coming quickly upon them, the band of assassins separated and fled. They, the informers, who had been of the band, did

not know, of their own knowledge, where Mr Kilmorey had taken refuge, but they believed that he had friends in the neighborhood prepared to receive and hide him. This was the evidence of the two informers, given with abundance of detail, and sifted and searched in cross-examination by the counsel for the defence, without any noteworthy appearance of breaking down

Marcella kept her eyes fixed on the faces of the informers all the time of their examination, and one of them especially excited her horror. He was a pallid, consumptive-looking creature, with narrow, sharp-featured face, and shifting eyes that never seemed to look straight at anything. He gave his evidence with a certain dogged air of determination—a great deal of meaning in a few words, which carried force with it for the moment, and impressed court and jury with a belief in the truth of his story. He appeared to resent his position as an informer, and made his statements with a bitterness that seemed to wish them unsaid. All this, which told strongly with his audience, roused in Marcella a sense of amazed loathing which almost suffocated her, and her fascinated gaze remained riveted to his evil countenance so long that it became imprinted on her brain with a vividness not likely to be effaced while she lived.

When he ceased speaking and was removed, a faintness seized her, and it required all her strength of will to stave off the swoon which would have made her an object of curiosity to the court.

When she had mastered the weakness so far as to be able to raise her eyes and emerge from her corner, she found that Bryan had vanished from the dock, that the court had risen, and that people were pressing out of the court-house; and she followed in the wake of the crowd, to pass the dreadful night as best she might.

The next morning she was in her place again, listening to the final examination and cross-examination of the informer Barrett, whose foul, false testimony she was now to be commanded to corroborate. When her name was called, there was a sudden dead silence in court, then a flutter of whispers and pressing forward of faces as every one asked his neighbor if he had heard aright. The sensation was so great that for a few moments everything was at a stand-still. Marcella heard the sound of the smothered excitement of numbers, like the hissing of a great wave about to overwhelm her, and then was conscious of nothing but Bryan's smile of encouragement straining towards her from his isolated standing-place in the dock.

So well had the secret been kept, that when Miss O'Kelly arose and left her seat to take her place in the witness-box the crowd was at a loss to know whether she were going to give testimony against or in favor of Kilmorey.

Considering all the circumstances, the latter conclusion was jumped at by the majority, and there was a momentary revulsion of feeling in favor of the prisoner.

This girl, this heiress, this wayward heroine, had got in her powerful little hand some telling piece of evidence in favor of her friend, perhaps her lover. She was going to prove an *alibi*, or to attempt to prove one. A wave of sympathy went towards her as she took her

stand in the witness-box and threw back her black gauze veil, which made an inky framework for her deathly white features.

With her large dark eyes wide open and fixed on some distant point before her, she looked like one in a trance. "She will faint," was whispered among the younger barristers, and a glass of water was placed beside her, which, however, she did not see. "Why does she look so terribly if she is going to help him?" asked one woman of another. No one noticed for the moment that it was as a witness for the prosecution she had been called. Mr. Shine, junior counsel for the prosecution, raised his face towards that spot in the court from where the soft eyes of Miss Eyre were gazing down full of sympathy at the witness, and got in return a glance which seemed to say that things were beginning to take a good turn—good at least in the estimation of this young lady, whose interest in Marcella had beguiled her into becoming a spectator of the scene.

At the sound of the counsel's voice directing his first question towards Miss O'Kelly, an absolute hush fell on the audience, and intense and breathless silence reigned in the court.

CHAPTER XXII.

CORROBORATIVE EVIDENCE.

"Miss O'Kelly—" Counsel's voice trembled a little, and he paused for a second. He was a father of daughters, and knew something of the story of this girl, whose heart, now laid bare to his knife, he was bound to lacerate.

"Miss O'Kelly, I shall be obliged to ask you a few questions as to your own personal history. Your real name is not O'Kelly, but was assumed in compliance with the desires of the deceased lady whose heiress you have become. Is this so?"

"It is so."

"What is your real name?"

"Marcella Grace."

"Up to the month of January last you had lived in rather poor circumstances?"

"Very poor."

"What occupation did your father follow, and where did he live?"

"He was a weaver of poplin. He lived in Weaver's Square, in the Liberties of Dublin."

Here a deep breath was drawn by many in court. Ladies looked at each other in amazement, but there was no time to speak before the next question arose.

"And you lived with him there?"

"I lived with him there."

"Now, on your oath, Marcella Grace, do you remember the night of the 10th of January last?"

"I remember it."

"About eleven o'clock at night, or nearer to midnight, what were you doing in your home in Weaver's Square?"

"Sewing."

"Your father having gone to bed, you were quite alone?"

"Quite alone."

"While you were sitting alone, sewing, you heard a knock at the door of your house, and you admitted a man who was flying from pursuit of the police?"

"I did so."

"And you hid him in a secret closet in your house, according to a previous arrangement?"

"There was no previous arrangement, because I never had seen him before that moment."

"But you hid him in the closet?"

"Yes."

"Now, on your oath, was that man whom you hid on the night of the 10th of January last the prisoner at the bar?"

"Yes."

A thrill like a wind passing over the reeds in a river went through the court, and then complete silence reigned as before.

"How long did he remain hidden in that closet?"

"Some three or four hours, as well as I can remember."

"And in the mean time the police searched the house, and were unable to find him?"

"Yes."

"After they were gone you liberated this man whom you had sheltered from justice, and allowed him to go free?"

"I had sheltered him from pursuit, not from justice. And I allowed him to go free."

"And afterwards you kept his secret, and continued to screen him, although you knew that murder had been done, and that justice was endeavoring to discover the guilty?"

"Yes."

Again there was a sensation in the court, and the counsel waited till it subsided.

"Miss Grace, did I understand you to say that till the moment when you opened your door to Mr. Kilmorey on that night in January you had never laid eyes on him?"

"I said so."

"You had no previous knowledge of him or his affairs?"

"None."

"Was not your father associated with the secret societies, and had not you yourself some knowledge of such people?"

"No; none. Nothing of the kind."

"Your father was in bed when you admitted Mr. Kilmorey. Was he then, or ever after, aware of your having taken such an extraordinary step?"

"Neither then, nor ever after, till his death."

"He had no share in your successful attempt to deceive the police?"

"He had no share. He died in ignorance of it."

"Now tell me why you took such a strange responsibility on yourself. What induced you, a young girl in the house, late at night, to admit a stranger because he knocked at your door?"

"Because I saw in his face, and heard in his voice, that he was good."

"Then it was merely on the strength of your instinctive belief in his goodness that you protected him and kept his secret?"

"Merely."

"Now tell me what was the second occasion on which you met this Mr. Bryan Kilmorey."

"It was in the street, on the 11th of January."

"Indeed! The day after the murder. What did he then say to you?"

"He did not speak to me, nor even see me. He was reading the bills on a newspaper office at Cork Hill, as numbers of others were doing. And I just saw him, and passed him by."

"You read the notice of a reward offered, I presume. You were a very poor girl that day, Miss Grace. Did it not enter your mind that you might have easily earned a large sum of money?"

"I was very poor, but honest. I believe I read of the reward, but I gave it no thought."

"Now, what was the reason of this devoted adherence to the man, if, as you have said, he was a stranger whom you had never seen before?"

"I cannot tell you more than I have already said. I only thought that I had never seen another man who looked so good. And I have never seen one since."

Counsel here glanced over some papers and changed the current of his questioning.

"It was about this time that the late Mrs. O'Kelly discovered her relationship to you and claimed you as her niece."

"It was just the time."

"What was the next occasion on which you met Mr. Bryan Kilmorey?"

"At the St. Patrick's ball, where I went with Mrs. O'Kelly."

"On that occasion you danced with him—"

"I do not know how to dance."

"Well, you spent some time in his company. Did he warn you to secrecy, or make any excuse for his conduct on the night of his first strange introduction to you?"

"None."

"Did he make no allusion whatever to the affair?"

"He did not recognize me, and I was careful after the first that he should not do so."

"Now, on your oath, did he not, immediately on the death of Mrs. O'Kelly, get you into his own keeping, and place you under the guardianship of his mother in his home at Inisheen?"

"No."

"Do you mean to say that you did not travel to Inisheen one week

after Mrs. O'Kelly's death, having no acquaintance with Mrs. Kilmorey at the time, and Mrs. O'Kelly having left no injunctions to account for your prompt action?"

"I do not mean to say so. Father Daly, and not Mr. Kilmorey, brought me to Inisheen."

"Without the knowledge of Kilmorey?"

"Entirely without his knowledge, and because Mrs. Kilmorey was a friend of his own—that is, a friend of Father Daly's."

Counsel again finding that he could make no further point in this direction, once more shifted the course of his attack.

"Miss Grace, I require you to tell me what was the first occasion on which reference was made by Mr. Kilmorey to the secret which you held concerning him, and to your possible evidence on this trial."

"On the night of his arrest at Inisheen."

"Do I understand you to say that during the six months in which you lived on friendly terms with and a good deal in the society of Mr. Kilmorey, he never alluded to the circumstances of his first meeting with you?"

"He never did. He did not recognize me as the person he had so met."

"Not in all those months?"

"Not until I told him on the night of his arrest."

"And he then warned you to refuse to give evidence against him?"

"No."

"When, then, did he do so?"

"He never did so."

"Yet you denied the truth of much that you have now admitted, and expressed your willingness to swear an untruth?"

"Yes."

"Who induced you to alter your mind and to give evidence against Mr. Kilmorey?"

"Mr. Kilmorey."

This reply startled both the court and the counsel so greatly that the latter repeated his question again in a more distinct form.

"Mr. Kilmorey himself persuaded you to give evidence against him? Why do you suppose he did that?"

"Because, as I have said before, he is good. He would have nothing but the truth."

"Are you not good enough yourself to tell the truth?"

"I am not so good as he is."

"Now, Miss Grace, you have made some very strange confessions. Perhaps you will tell me what motive you had for refusing to tell the truth, and for entertaining the intention of perjuring yourself? What influence had been brought to bear upon you?"

Marcella flushed vividly, and then turned deadly pale, and her slight fingers locked themselves more tightly together. Counsel for the defence here interposed and urged that this question ought not to be pressed; but his opinion was overruled, and the examination went on.

"From what point did the influence come which led you to deny your knowledge of the facts you have now admitted? If you are afraid or ashamed, take courage."

"I am not afraid or ashamed. The influence you speak of came only from the weakness of my own heart. Bryan Kilmorey is everything in the world to me, and I have promised to be his wife."

The thrilling excitement which here swept through the court went deeper than anything of the kind which had preceded it. The answer so rudely pressed and forced from the witness was quite unexpected. But the sensation was quickly over. Curiosity to hear more soon restored general silence.

"So this man, who knew himself to be under suspicion of murder, who was aware that he must soon stand where he now stands, occupied the interval in paying his addresses to a beautiful and wealthy young lady. On your oath, did he not try to induce you to fly from the country with him?"

"No."

Here it became evident that the witness's highly strung nervous tension was beginning to relax; and fearing a scene which might attract too much sympathy towards her, the counsel for the prosecution intimated that he had nothing further to ask her at that moment. A few questions in cross-examination from Bryan's counsel enabled her to make several clear points as to the unselfishness of the prisoner's dealing with her, and her belief in his entire innocence of the charge against him. An opportunity was also given her to relate how Mike had warned her of danger to Mr. Kilmorey from the enmity of the Fenians. Until all was said, and nothing more was required of her, her courage never gave way. At last she was permitted to stand down, and hid herself in a private room of the court for a time, refusing to go home until Bryan had been removed from the dock for that day.

In the mean time the examination of witnesses went on, the informers were recalled and re-examined, and it was quite towards the end of the proceedings for that day when Mr. Gerald Sullivan, Q.C., counsel for the prisoner, opened the case for the defence.

He began by sketching the career of Bryan Kilmorey from the moment when, as a rash, ardent youth, he joined the Fenians, till now when he stood in the dock a victim to the plots of a debased branch of Fenianism whose vengeance he had provoked by seceding from its rank. He described the origin of the Fenian Brotherhood. The name was borrowed from the Fenian band who were the standing army of ancient mythical Ireland. By their very name they were declared soldiers, and, after their dream of a romantic warfare had been rudely broken, many of them withdrew to peaceful aims, though still nominally Fenians. Many more passed their years as imbittered and disappointed, but still honorable men, in self-exile in various lands, while others, counsel was sorry to say, had formed themselves into criminal societies with a purpose which could not be justified by any law, human or divine. It was of the latter class that the prisoner had been so unfortunate as to provoke the anger.

His only defence against this charge was the statement that he had been lured into the toils of enemies in order that a case might be made up against him to his ruin. Of this Mr. Kilmorey had little proof to give beyond his own word. He could bring forward witnesses to testify to his blameless life, to the great efforts he had made for the benefit of his people, impoverishing himself to give them a chance of improving their condition. It was in such ways that his money had been spent—all the money he could spare out of the mere remnant of a fortune left him by those who had recklessly squandered it to no good purpose. It was true that in politics he was a warm Nationalist; but when would the world be brought to draw a fair line between the strong Nationalist in Irish politics and the wretch whose soul, if not his hand, was dyed with the guilt of the assassin? Till that line was drawn, blunders, terrible and deadly, would continue to be made.

Mr. Sullivan then referred to the night of the 10th of January, stating that on the same morning Bryan Kilmorey had received a note requesting him to visit an old tenant of his, one who had been in his father's employment for years, and, having left the country to take service in Dublin, had fallen into poverty, and was lying ill in a poor room in a certain street in the Liberties. It was characteristic of Mr. Kilmorey that he went at the hour appointed—an hour so late as to be calculated to arouse suspicion only that the circumstance was plausibly accounted for. That letter Mr. Kilmorey had unfortunately thrown into the fire almost as soon as read, having first made an entry in his note-book of the name and address of the sufferer who had appealed to him; but it had undoubtedly been sent him to lure him to the scene of the murder, so that he might be pointed out to the police and arrested for the crime.

"At the appointed hour Mr. Kilmorey was approaching the street indicated to him, when he heard a sudden outcry at some little distance; and a voice of one who came running to meet him, a voice he thought he recognized, said to him urgently that there was a plot to compromise his good name, and he had better get out of the way for a few hours, as the police were almost upon him. To this he replied that he had done nothing wrong, and asked why he should fly. The answer was given, rapidly and pressingly. His enemies, he was told, were stronger than he; there was no time for explanations, but his only safety from ruin lay in a prudent retreat. In the same moment the person who had given the warning fled on, and Bryan Kilmorey stood face to face with what he felt only too likely to be the truth, seeing that he had again and again been warned that a plot was being hatched against him. Without waiting to consider further, he knocked at the nearest door and asked to be admitted and sheltered for a few hours, till the danger, whatever it might be —a danger which had to himself at that moment the vaguest outlines—should blow over. Mr. Kilmorey had since regretted this step; but it was naturally taken under the impulse to disappoint audacious trickery, and quietly to slip out of the evil hands that were almost laid on him, to escape without public brawl or disturbance.

"While Bryan Kilmorey remained in that closet which had been described, and knew that the police were searching the house for him, he regretted having sought such sanctuary; but he was well aware that he could only make matters worse by giving himself up at such a moment. Now it had been sought to prove that the inmates of the house which admitted him were friends of his, leagued with him in crime; but after the evidence they had just listened to, no one present could doubt that, upon this strange occasion, the young lady whom they had heard and seen in the witness-box and the prisoner met for the first time. On the romantic circumstances of their later acquaintance, and the relations in which they now stood to one another, he would not dwell. It was too delicate a subject for public handling, but he felt sure that the strong conviction in the mind of this innocent girl that the man to whom she had promised to devote her life was guiltless and good could not but have a serious importance in the considerations of the jury. Also, the startling circumstance that this young lady had been induced to give damaging evidence against Kilmorey by the persuasions of Kilmorey himself, must carry weight with it—an assurance of the integrity, not to say heroism, of the prisoner's character."

After much more in the same strain from the prisoner's counsel, that gentleman's eloquence was interrupted by the rising of the court.

The next morning, after the conclusion of his speech, the witnesses for the defence were examined, prominent among whom was Father Daly, who testified to the affectionate relations always existing between the late Mr. Kilmorey and his son; also to the fact that Bryan had not been aware of his (Father Daly's) intention of bringing Miss O'Kelly to Inisheen till after that intention had been carried out.

Mike, the mountain lad, Marcella's friend, gave evidence of the plot which, the defence asserted, had been laid by a murderous secret society to ruin the prisoner by bringing this charge against him. But Mike was not a clever youth, except in the matter of vigilance prompted by his affections, and the bullying cross-examination to which he was subjected terrified him into some blunders. The most striking point he made was when almost worried out of his wits he burst into tears and exclaimed, "I'm tryin' to tell you God's truth, and ye will not let me." When the last of Kilmorey's witnesses had been examined and cross-examined, the counsel for the prosecution again took the matter into his hands.

With a few thundering sentences like heavy blows he split the case for the defence from crown to heel, tore off what he called the false rags of sentiment in which villany had tried to hide itself, and placed the murderer Kilmorey before the jury in his genuine colors. He, counsel, believed that such a thin, miserable defence had never been set up before in any court of justice. He declared to his heavens that he was more disgusted at the sentimental side of the prisoner's conduct than at its grosser brutality. This man had sought to shelter himself behind the tenderness of a woman—a

woman who, in spite of the regard with which the wretch had contrived to inspire her, had found herself obliged by truth to stand up and bear witness against him. He had trumped up a poor weak story, for which he had absolutely no support, of having been lured to the scene of the murder by an appeal to his charity through the wiles of a secret society—that society of which he was in reality one of the most active members. Would any man in his senses believe such a fabrication? If he had been warned of plots against him, why had he not kept some evidence of the fact? Where was the note which had summoned him, an innocent man, to that fatal spot? Would not any sane person have been on his guard against invitations of the kind, or, at least, have preserved the documents which conveyed them? Counsel did not wish to dwell too much on the connection with this case of the charming lady whom they had seen so painfully placed in the witness-box, and who was fortunately young enough to outlive the trouble into which she had been drawn by unfortunate circumstances, but he would ask the jury to consider whether the whole of this episode in the case did not tell in the strongest manner against the honesty of the prisoner's character. Counsel did not wish to throw any doubt on the evidence of the Rev. Mr. Daly, but it was, to say the least, a strange coincidence which brought this girl, who was in possession of Kilmorey's secret, hurriedly into Kilmorey's home, kept her there under the strict guardianship of the prisoner and his mother, and resulted in the engagement of her affections by this person with a trial for murder hanging over his head, an engagement to marry between the man in such a terrible position and a beautiful girl and an heiress. As for her statement that she was induced to bear witness against him by his own representations, well, it was not until the story had leaked out, and it was practically impossible to withhold this evidence, that the prisoner had (according to the account of his friends) put on such an heroic attitude. The fact remained that the young lady had several times refused to tell the truth, and had expressed her determination to deny all knowledge of that part of the prisoner's movements on the night of the 10th of January which could only be known to herself. The jury was open to the conviction that a change in the young lady's own feeling, a return to right judgment after she had been removed from the influence of the prisoner, rather than the reason put forward by her with a woman's loyalty, had procured for the prosecution that necessary link in the evidence which perfected the case against Kilmorey, as first set up by the confession of informers whose red-handed companion he had been. Counsel then proceeded to demolish the evidence of Mike of the mountain, whom he described as a blundering, misguided lad, who had been persuaded to give testimony of a plot which had never existed, through his dog-like attachment to the accused. Finally, he dwelt on the steady, unflinching evidence of the informers, who had every reason for telling the truth, having bought their own lives at its cost. In conclusion, counsel wound up with an eloquent denunciatory peroration which left a stinging reverberation in the ears

of the listeners as of the sound of blows well placed and well deserved, hit home with a courage and vigor that put mere sentiment to shame, and wrought everlasting service to the cause of truth.

After this Kilmorey's counsel made a final muster of their thin forces, and rallied for a last attempt to secure the sympathy of the jury for the prisoner. All the old points were returned to and dwelt upon, and a strong appeal was made against the terrible circumstantial evidence that unfortunately seemed to corroborate the lying story of perjured informers, wretches who are in this country too often encouraged to swear away an innocent man's life in order to escape with their own. For the moment a reaction in favor of the prisoner was felt all through the court, and when counsel for the defence sat down there was a general feeling that the last words in the prisoner's favor had been moving in the extreme, and that the verdict of the jury might yet probably go in his favor.

Then the judge got up, the thin-faced judge whose sharp features had been sharpening noticeably all through the case, and as he took off his spectacles, and blinked a cruel gray glance round the court, the hopes of those whose sympathies were with the prisoner got a sudden chill. At the first cold measured words that fell from his lips the little warmth that had gathered round the defence was gradually frozen away, and his friends gave Kilmorey up as lost. The charge was, to use a common phrase, dead against the prisoner, and the fact that the other judge was seen to wipe his eyes surreptitiously seemed to add the last touch to the tragedy.

Several ladies lowered their heads and began to weep, but Marcella sat dry-eyed and erect. We'll pass over the terrible interval between the conclusion of the charge from the bench and the return of the jury from their deliberations. The verdict was "*Guilty.*"

For a moment Marcella's eyes still clung to Kilmorey's, and then there was a dull sound unnoticed in the excitement of the crowd, and the girl's white face disappeared from its place in the dimly lighted corner where she had sheltered herself.

Father Daly and old Bridget had a sorry drive home that evening, holding a crushed, inanimate burden between them, thankful that at least she had not heard the death-sentence pronounced, but trembling for the horrors of the hideous and inevitable to-morrow.

CHAPTER XXIII.

DEATH AND LIFE.

Darkness and horror hung over the house in Merrion Square where two stricken women lived through their first hours of hopeless and inconsolable anguish. The mother's appalling shriek when she heard the fatal news was followed by a fit of violence which subsided after a time and left her mind unhinged and full of delusions. Happily, her insanity involved entire forgetfulness of the misfortune

which had overturned her reason. She believed that Bryan was travelling abroad for his pleasure. He had undertaken to make a voyage round the world, and could not be home for a year.

"And I am so glad he is gone," she would exclaim, "for I always had a dread that these Fenians might drag him into some kind of trouble."

"But the worst of it is," she would whisper to Father Daly, "that I fear Marcella thinks he has forgotten her. She ought not to indulge such fancies; but you see she is looking shockingly ill."

Marcella's suffering was of a different order. No shrieks came from her, and no merciful madness blotted out the terrible reality from her mind. With white lips and sunken eyes she tried to listen to Father Daly's religious exhortations, but heard nothing. The roar of a sea that had no shore was in her ears; shipwreck lay all around her; and a ghastly something to which her eyes as yet had given no shape loomed on her horizon.

"Can you not cry a little, my child?" said Father Daly, seeing that his words of attempted consolation did not reach her brain. The tears were rolling down his own wrinkled face.

"There will be time enough to cry—afterwards," she said; "I am going now to Bryan. He will be expecting me."

This was the day after the close of the trial, when she knew that his death, a horrible and disgraceful death, was soon to separate them.

"My dear, I am afraid to let you see him yet. I have been with him this morning, and he is as brave as a lion. Remember, it is your part now to keep up his courage. I fear if you go to him like this you will break him down."

"I think I am not going to break him down. The martyrs who were burned and crucified did not break each other down. God will help us, too."

Then he took her to the prison and left her alone with Kilmorey for an hour, keeping near the cell, so that he could be summoned if needed. But Marcella made no scene. She seemed to have no longer any feeling for her own suffering, physical or mental. Her whole soul appeared occupied with the necessity for being helpful to Kilmorey in his need.

"I never seen a young creature suffer so brave and not die of it," said the warder to the priest. "Them that screams and faints get over it afterwards, but trouble like that drops down on a suddent when it can do no more."

Father Daly agreed, and acknowledged to himself that so to drop down might be the best thing Marcella could do after the final touch had been put to the tragedy. Only he felt a grave doubt as to whether her unnatural strength would keep up so long.

It was some relief to him when, on returning home that evening, she fell into an agony of natural grief, moaning and weeping, and calling upon God to deliver her from insupportable torment. He and Bridget watched beside her all night, and he strove through the long terrible hours to save her reason from becoming wrecked by the

paroxysms of frenzy which attacked her brain as each fresh image from the hideous future rose with ghastly reality before the eyes of her imagination.

She not only knew, but had realized now, that Bryan had got to die a felon's death.

Her reiterated cry, "Father Daly, *is* there a God—*is* there a God?" brought down the old man's sympathetic tears plentifully. He could not bring himself to rebuke her for her unbelief, only kept saying,

"There is a God, my dear, and he is good. The cross is his throne; the crown of thorns was on his own head before he put it on yours."

He believed that the first despairing ravings of a broken heart are not heeded in heaven. Mercy waits patiently for the crushed spirit to right itself, for the soul burning in flames of anguish to rise out of the fury and delirium of the fiery furnace before it requires words of faith and resignation to come meekly from the tongue.

Towards morning she became more calm, her natural thoughtfulness for others returned, and she reproached herself for robbing the kind old man of his rest.

A little later she was taken possession of by a frantic hope which kept her in a fever of expectation for days.

"It is quite impossible that it could happen," she said. "Something will come to prove the truth. I will go to the Lord-lieutenant myself and tell him so. I will ask him to wait and to consider. When he thinks over the matter he will see what I mean. It is utterly impossible that in a Christian country such a horror should be permitted—"

Father Daly assisted her to carry out this intention, and accompanied her to the Castle, and stood by her during the short interview granted her with viceroyalty. His excellency explained to her that, unfortunately, her interference was useless. The case had been fully established, and in a matter of this kind it was impossible to take the life of one criminal and spare that of another. The fact that the convict was a gentleman only aggravated his crime. The terrible words were gently if coldly spoken, and Marcella had only herself to blame for the extra suffering heaped on her by this incident.

After that she went down again into the abyss where there is no God and no hope, only the howling temptations that set upon an immortal soul given up to despair. And again Father Daly watched and waited for her return, praying for her who could not pray for herself; and at last he was rewarded by seeing her rise once more into the light of heaven and look at him with sane and seeing eyes.

Then, with an astonishing rally of all her powers, she would behave herself during her visit to Bryan with a courage which amazed both the priest and the condemned man. And so the fearful hours went past, like a slow lifetime of torture, and the day for the final separation began to draw near.

As for Kilmorey himself, he was, as Father Daly had said, brave as a lion, looking his terrible and disgraceful end in the face with the calmness of a true soldier who is losing his life in the thick of

the fight. Somebody must die when there is a cause to be won, and it is not always where glory has been earned that it is given. A scaffold will do as well as a battle-field for the passing of a martyr. He had made mistakes in his time, and let this expiate them, seeing that death was not the wages of mistake, nor of any wrong-doing, but had followed directly in the wake of his daring resolution to do right.

His deepest trouble was for Marcella. God had comforted his mother with a merciful oblivion, and she would perhaps never, while she lived, know of the fate of her son. But it was for the young and passionate soul, strong to suffer, and valiant in its desire to fight his fight with him to the end, for whom there was no oblivion, nothing but wakeful wide-eyed anguish in store, that the heart of his manhood was wrung almost to the destruction of his courage. The sight of her bleached mouth, and eyes withering away in her head with sorrow, was more than he could bear. He wished that Father Daly would take her at once to some other country where she might remain till after the end—where she could not realize the last scenes because of distance, and of unusual surroundings.

Father Daly shook his head when the suggestion was made to him. "You do not know her yet," he said. "Where she is she will stay—that is, if her body and soul keep long enough together. I'm not at all sure, however, that she will not be in heaven before you—will not be the first to welcome you when you get there."

It wanted now but two days of the end, and Marcella was on her knees at Father Daly's knee, pouring out her heart to him as a child to its mother.

"I have given it all up, father, and I will not struggle with God any more; I will not make things harder for *him*. I will smile at him in the last moment if you will only listen now to what I am going to say to you. And if it seems to you very strange and impossible you will forgive me, for perhaps I am a little mad—a horror like this might make any one mad, Father Daly; only I will try to keep my wits till all is over. I could not live through my life afterwards if I thought I had missed a word or a look of his that I might have had with me to keep."

Father Daly put his hand on her bent head, and prayed over her silently, as her voice stopped, and her whole frame quivered and rocked with anguish.

"I am not crying," she said, presently, having mastered her agony for another effort to speak, "for I promised to look cheerful the next time I see him. I promised to smile at him now every time until the last, and I must not have my eyes all black and red with weeping when I go to him. What I want to say to you is this: it is always coming to me that if—I may not after all be able to die, as I hope and pray I may, to-morrow or next week; I may even have to live years; and if I had had his name for my own to go through the world with, I could have been braver. I could claim him as my own in heaven—"

"My dear, there is neither marrying nor giving in marriage there."

"I know that, Father Daly, but I would like that the very angels should know that he belonged to me."

"My child, do you mean that you would marry him now?"

"Oh, Father Daly, if it might be! If you would join our hands and give us your blessing, so that I might carry the name they have blasted through my life, and might care for his mother and his people, who would then be mine."

Father Daly was startled and shocked. A marriage in a convict's prison, on the very verge of a grave, seemed to him too awful to be thought of; and yet to this ghost-like girl, with her hollow eyes and pleading wail, it seemed the only one thing in the universe to give her a little comfort—a little courage to endure what was to come. To bear his name in the face of the world that had condemned him, to be able to speak of him here below as her own, and to claim him among the angels above, to have the right to take a daughter's place beside his afflicted mother, and the place of a mother to the people whom he had loved and was leaving forlorn—those were the only boons that were within the limits of possibility for her. How could any one refuse to think the matter out for her?

He raised her from her knees and told her to take a little rest—idle words, as he knew while he was speaking them—and he would reflect on what she had said, and consider whether anything could be done.

When the piteous request was conveyed by the priest to the condemned man in his cell, Kilmorey's courage broke down for the first time, and those strange, rare things, the tears of a brave man, dropped on Father Daly's hands, which had closed upon his own.

"I am not worthy of such love," he said. "If I might have lived I would have tried to be worthy of it. But how can I be so cruel as to allow her so to destroy herself? She is young enough to make new ties. She will not forget; but her sorrow will wear itself out in time, and a happy fate may still be in store for her. As things stand now, her connection with me will soon be forgiven and forgotten; but marked out by my name—"

"I thought like you at first," said Father Daly, "but I have changed my mind. That creature has no future before her except what is bound up with you. You have brought her, my poor lad, under God's providence, a great deal of sorrow; give her the only scrap of comfort it is in your power to bestow on her. A heart like hers is beyond all our measurements. Only the God that makes it knows what can satisfy it, or give it rest."

And so it was arranged; and in the felon's cell, with Bridget and the warder for witnesses, Father Daly made Marcella and Kilmorey man and wife.

"*Till death do us part.*" Very awful did those impressive words of the service sound when only twenty-four hours lay between the moment of speaking and the coming of the destroyer whose right to part bridegroom and bride no one dared to question. "*What*

God hath joined together let no man put asunder." Yet these two were to be sundered by man, and how soon!

That night, after the last stroke of the clock ending the prison visiting-hours had driven her away from her husband, Marcella Kilmorey was alone in her darkened and melancholy house, prostrate on the floor, struggling to pray, imploring to be allowed to keep her senses to the last, and not, through madness or sickness, to desert her post while his eyes could look on her and draw comfort from her smile. The hand on which he had placed the wedding-ring, with the old pearl ring he had given her that fatal night in the Liberties set above it as guard, was thrust into her breast and clinched there, as she called on Heaven to help her in the suffering of this hour. Through the whirlwind of her agony a faint and spectral joy hovered near her heart at the touch of that ring, which was like a living tie, holding her to him now, and drawing her towards him hereafter.

No matter how long she might have to live here without him, or how withered and wrinkled she might have become before the years released her to him, he would know her looking down out of heaven by the gleaming of that ring. No matter how far she might have to wander even when released, seeking for him through the boundless regions of the other world, she would, having all eternity to search for him, be able to make herself known at last through the shining of that mystic circlet. Has not gold, which neither crumbles like flesh nor rusts like steel, a sort of immortality among mouldering things; and would not the gleam of this cling to her, even there, somehow?

She started, alarmed at her wandering fancies, suspicious and watchful of her own sanity. Madness was waiting like a wolf to devour her, she thought—to snatch her from his sight even before death's black curtain could descend to hide her from him. To keep that wolf at bay she claimed sanctuary within the fiery circle of the Redeemer's ever-burning love on the Cross. By fire only could she be saved from the monster. She must hold herself sane and sound for a few hours longer, so that in the last moment she might be all-present, body and soul, brains and heart, to stand with him on the verge, and send her spirit forward with him.

And here the ghastly reality of common facts loomed black and hideous from behind their spiritual veilings, and the form and shape of what she was soon to see, in its enormity of horror and iniquity, filled all her consciousness and stared straight in the eyes of her despair.

A sudden cry arose in the street outside; and the wan creature, swaying in the darkness like an already broken reed lashed by storm, caught the sound with her fine ear, held her breath involuntarily to listen, and then pressed her hands to her head that she might not take in the sound of which she guessed the meaning.

It was the last call of the newspaper-sellers for that night, trying to earn the price of bed and supper out of the morbid curiosity of individuals eager to know the final arrangements for the event of the morrow morning at Kilmainham.

Then Marcella's weak body was seized with a long fit of shuddering, like the convulsion which sometimes comes before death, but which in this case was only the outward sign of the uttermost torture which human nature can suffer through, and yet live.

When it became known that day in Dublin that the heiress of Distresna had married the convict Kilmorey in prison, and on the very eve of the last scene of his tragedy, a curious thrill ran through all circles, and for the moment public feeling pierced that dead wall of separation which rises up at once between the criminal condemned to death and the outer living world to which he belongs no more, and pitied the two suffering creatures who had joined hands undauntedly under the very eye of the King of Terrors.

This romantic incident, as it was called by the world, roused again the wavering belief in Kilmorey's innocence which had for long dragged out a kind of cowardly existence in some minds, and disposed them to question the conclusions of the jury who had decided on the guilt of the condemned. It was remarked that the girl who had wedded him on the very step of the scaffold must at least be thoroughly convinced of his innocence; for of course this strange act must have been done of her own wish. Nothing could be gained to Kilmorey by a marriage with her now.

But in opposition to the few persons who are powerfully attracted by the out-of-the-way and romantic incidents of real life there are always larger numbers who feel an unconquerable repulsion towards all erratic departures from the well-beaten paths of conventional behavior. There were not wanting many people who held that Marcella had played a forward and unseemly part all through this business, and that her thrusting herself into notice again at so ghastly a moment—a moment which all right-minded people would be glad to forget—showed her singularly wanting in decency, not to say *savoir faire.* She ought, once the convict's cell had closed on her miserable lover, to have disappeared from public view and hidden her head in a kindly obscurity. In that case human sympathy might have sought for her and found her, after the memory of painful events in her life had a little passed away. But now she had finally made a fiasco of her future. Nobody would marry the widow of a murderer, or care to be associated in any way with a woman who had deliberately assumed an accursed name.

It was thus that the strange wedding of the morning had brought forcibly to minds that wanted to forget it the date of the death of the convict Kilmorey, and on that night when Marcella closed her ears to the cries of the newspaper boys and writhed alone in her despair, the subject of the event of the next morning was discussed by many lips. A ball was going forward at the opposite side of the square; and in the pauses of the waltz the startling romance was mentioned and then forgotten again as the music stilled tongues and stirred feet—music which wafted through open windows over the trees in the square crossed Marcella's agonized consciousness with an occasional blare of sweet sounds: echoes from the St. Patrick's Hall, as it seemed, where Kilmorey had smiled delightedly at her

without recognizing her, where she had first learned his name, and been permitted to stand beside him on an equality of position.

With those gales of melody came before her eyes the glowing of flowers, and to her nostrils the odorous breath of them on the air; and her hero's grave yet smiling face once more ascended out of the crowd on the staircase, and bent towards her with an expression of warm pleasure and startled interest.

If anything can add one more touch to the hideousness of hopeless calamity, it is the flashing remembrance of former unexpected joy, with its deceitful surprises and unasked-for promises. A new blast from the fiery furnace scorched this creature's soul as the music swept through her, and made as if to thrust her out into the howling wilderness of insanity from which, with open-eyed resolution, she was struggling to withhold herself.

A couple of waltzers stepped out on the balcony in front of the festive house: Miss Eyre, the soft-eyed girl who had sympathized with the sufferers in the Kilmorey affair from the first, and Mr. Shine, the young barrister, who, being one of the counsel for the prosecution, had fallen in love with his present companion because she had instinctively taken the side of the defence.

"I will not dance any more," said the girl, petulantly, "I cannot get it out of my head. No one ought to have given a ball to-night. I hate myself for being here. Oh heavens, here are the newspaper men coming screaming round the square. Think of that poor creature listening to them over there across the trees!"

"By Jove, I believe they are calling something new," exclaimed Mr. Shine, suddenly interrupting himself in his task of consoling his gentle partner with such philosophic platitudes as a good-hearted man could bring to mind on such an occasion. "Just wait here quietly for a few moments while I go and find out what they are making such a rout about. If it is one of their usual falsehoods, I will have them up in court for it."

He returned presently, and took possession again of his seat in the balcony.

"They have been telling the truth for once," he said—"Kilmorey is reprieved. Don't look so white, or I shall have to leave you again to fetch you some water or wine."

"Don't, please, don't. Tell me the particulars."

"I don't know that it's much to be rejoiced over, even by those most concerned. The sentence is commuted to penal servitude for life."

"But the reason?"

"It seems that one of the informers died suddenly this afternoon, and made some kind of wild statement before he expired. No depositions were taken, as there was not time; but two or three witnesses have sworn that he exclaimed urgently that Kilmorey was innocent."

"But in that case ought not Kilmorey to be set free altogether?"

"There is the other informer, who had the longest and the strongest tale to tell, and there is the powerful corroborative evidence. I

don't believe myself that Kilmorey did it, but, all things considered, he was bound to be condemned. I am surprised that even this occurrence has made any difference at headquarters. It is out of the usual course of procedure under the present stern *régime.*"

At the same moment Father Daly was knocking at the door of Marcella's gloomy mansion. He had left her only for a short time, with the promise to return at midnight and watch with her for a few hours, waiting for the moment when they two might again be admitted to the prisoner's cell, not to leave him again until after the final parting. The old man trembled with agitation as he waited impatiently for the opening of the door, and his face was wet with tears, of which he was perhaps unconscious, or forgot to dry away.

Marcella, hearing the knock, which was to her ear as the tolling of a knell or the sound of stones falling on a coffin, gathered up her shuddering limbs from the floor where she lay, and made her way down the staircase to meet this faithful friend of her tribulation. At the foot of the last flight he was waiting for her, hearing her coming.

"My dear," he said, "where are you? I have turned almost blind. Give me your hand. Are you able to hear a little lightening of your cross, Marcella? Hush, child, there is a change for us. *He does not die.* There is a reprieve—"

At the first hint of what was coming the shattered creature, staring at him with dry fixed eyes, fell forward into his fatherly arms; at the last words she slipped from them again without a sound, and lay, as if stone dead, across his feet.

CHAPTER XXIV.

SEPARATION.

THE remainder of that night was spent by Father Daly in dragging her through an unexpected danger, in tiding her over a new crisis—the sudden return of joy into veins from which it had been with long and slow purgation torturingly expelled. He tried to moderate her wild transports of delight, reminding her that this unlooked-for boon did not mean freedom and happiness.

"But it is life—life! The sun will shine on his living face at noon to-day. His eyes will open to-morrow morning, and the next, and the next! His heart will be beating still this day week—this day year. Oh, Father Daly, with life, what possibilities! I *cannot* see any further than just this yet. Now, I will not die, neither. I must not die. Oh, Father Daly, do not let me die. I am like a poor starved creature, am I not—bound to drop into the grave in a month? That is what I was hoping for, praying for; but now it is different, different. Oh, I must not die, I will not die. Give me food to eat; anything to make me live and be strong; for I have

a great deal to do, Father Daly. I cannot remember what it is now; but I know I have a great deal before me to do."

For many hours this rapture in the mere possession of his life lasted. Her face altered again with wonderful quickness; the pinched, darkened features took their natural curves and color; her eyes lost their fevered lustre, and grew soft and luminous with happiness. On her way to the convict's cell she was bright, cheerful, almost gay. She could not remember that a separation almost as cruel as death, and in some ways more unendurable, was hanging over their heads, whom Death had unexpectedly failed to part at once and forever.

Kilmorey himself had realized more readily the questionable nature of the boon that had been granted to him. He knew something of the horrors of a convict's life, and it taxed all his courage to meet it with fortitude. To see the face of his young wife smiling at him, to think of his peaceful home upon the lake, to remember his plans and hopes for his people, and know that these must be lost and forgotten, shut out for the long span of an intolerable lifetime behind prison walls by years and miles of time and distance—all this staggered the spirit within him, and made his heart quail when, in his solitude, he stood up and confronted the truth.

Would it not have been easier to die?

His death would at least have set her free, given her the chance, if not the certainty, of beginning a new life, even if many years hence, even if in a new country, and under such new conditions as she could not foresee. No such possibility was now before her. Chained by a chain that could not be broken to one who could have no part in her life, she would be like a living body bound to a corpse. No freedom, no gradually dawning peace and joy would ever belong to her until time and labor, having worn out the resisting strength of his manhood, might crush him at last into a felon's grave.

It seemed to him now that he had been cruelly wrong in marrying her, criminally weak in yielding to her pathetic prayer to be allowed to belong more absolutely to his memory, and to have a right to him recognized by the angels of heaven. Good God among what herds of demons must her right in him now be claimed! What a horror she had taken into her young life! Overwhelmed by these thoughts, Kilmorey looked back almost with regret on the calm courage with which he had stood erect yesterday, looking at a scaffold.

But when the door of his cell opened, and he saw her face radiant with joy shining before him, he forgot everything, except that it was sweet to be still in the same world with her. As his wife wept in his arms, he felt that somehow or somewhere there must be a future in store for them.

"Do not reproach me for looking gay," she said; "do not ask me to grieve any more. Not now; I cannot think of anything but that you are here, instead of gone where I could not follow you. There may be a terrible time coming; I cannot see it yet. I will not see it, Bryan. Let me rest a little from suffering; just looking at you, listening to you."

"Dearest, I am so selfish, I can think of nothing but that I love you, and that God has left me life."

"Left *us* life—I should soon have followed you. But my fear was that I should not die for a long time. And yet how could I have thought of deserting your mother? And I have good news for her. The doctor thinks that she may recover."

"Thank Heaven if there is hope for her."

"I will take such perfect care of her until—you come back to us."

"My darling, you must not think of that; there will be no coming back. But you may come to see me—sometimes."

"No coming back? You coward! Can this be the man who was so ready for death, and who would not quail an inch? Have you no hope in you, after all that has happened? If you have not, no matter. I have got enough for two."

"It was easier to die, and leave you a widow, than to leave you a wife and yet no wife. Oh, this cruel ring which is to bind you to that which is no better than a corpse, a living man behind a prison wall; this wicked ring, which is to rob your youth of every hope—a sign that you are linked forever with a convict. Would to God I had not been so weak as to be persuaded to put it on your finger."

"Ah, now indeed you are cruel. So you only pretended to love me; you are sorry you are bound to me; you wedded me hoping to escape from me? Then, sir, you might have kept your repentance a secret from me. It would have been kinder not to rob me of my foolish joy—"

"My love, your courage under this wrong I have done you is breaking my heart."

"Then I must express it badly, or wrap it up in some repulsive disguise; for if I could make you feel it as I feel it, your heart would be the gladder for it. You would be thankful that I have the comfort of this ring, the support it will give me, the authority it will bestow on me, even the power it will confer on me to take care of your people for you—until you come—until you come."

"I will hope to please you, I will believe anything you bid me. My people will have a trusty steward over them, my poor mother will have a faithful daughter by her side. But my darling, who ought to have a husband to take care of her—"

"Has got one, thank you, and one who is quite to her taste, though you do not appear to think much of him."

"He would have been a loving and tender one, he would have shielded her from every hurt. I think he would have been able to make her happiness, if evil had not befallen him. As it is, he is only a millstone round her neck, a cross laid on her shoulders—"

"A great joy in her heart, a crown on her head, a glory round her life—how far shall we go on with it?" laughed Marcella, interrupting him. "Oh, my dear, you do not know me yet, but you must try and believe in what you are to me. I tell you while you are still in the world I cannot altogether mourn. I am too full of the future which God must be getting ready for you. Why has he

spared your life now except for that future? While you are away I shall live in it, and for it, and you will be happy too, knowing that you are suffering like the souls in Purgatory, only kept away for a time from the beautiful life that is waiting for you. It will be such a lovely life, won't it, when we are together taking care of the people at Inisheen? It will come soon, Bryan—it must come soon. I will weary the heavens with my prayers till the truth comes to light. And then the whole world will acknowledge my martyr whom I have been glorifying."

He allowed her to rave on in the fever of joy which the reaction from the chills of death had brought upon her, and tried to hide his own anguish, which was in its sober senses and wide-awake to the reality of the parting that was at hand. He knew that soon enough the sense of hopeless catastrophe would descend upon her once more, and said to himself that he must store up his own strength for the moment when hers should fail. He put aside the haunting thought that he was leaving her alone in the world, cut off from all human sympathy by the curse of bearing a convict's name, and tried to believe, or to pretend to believe for the hour, in the impossible future which she insisted on creating for him. He knew very well that a convict who has narrowly escaped death has not much further boon to hope for from justice, and he felt that he could better bear to wear out his life in a prison cell than accept freedom, unless his innocence were fully established. All the unlikelihoods which Marcella would not see were arrayed before his eyes in their uncompromising actuality; and yet he smiled with her, talking lover's talk, the sweetness of which sometimes beguiled him into forgetting wholly the terrible loneliness of the waking which lay beyond the full living and loving of this short-lived dream.

During the small space which lay between the date of the commutation of his sentence and the departure of the convict for Portland prison she was with him all the time that prison rules would permit; sometimes accompanied by Father Daly, sometimes by Bridget, travelling back and forward through winter rain and fog from the melancholy house in Merrion Square, where his mother sat reading imaginary letters from him all day long, and talking about his travels, and congratulating herself continually that he was safe at the other side of the world, away from the Fenians. When she was not with him Marcella was waiting on Mrs. Kilmorey, talking to her cheerfully about Bryan's return—that return towards which her own heart was now set in hope with all the force which her nature could muster—or praying in the old church where she had first begun to pray for him. As the hour for parting drew near, there were no signs about her of the setting in of that despair which Bryan had feared to see, and he watched her with surprise as her manner became more tranquil, and her strength seemed to strengthen, instead of vanishing before the anguish of parting like a phantom in the light of day. He did not know with what passion of earnestness she had prayed for that strength, with what fervor she had asked for supernatural help to brace up her courage

for the separation. She would not weaken him in his cruelest moment by her complaints, nor send him away overwhelmed by the thought that he had left behind him a woman with a wretched life, whose moans and tears must haunt him in his prison cell, and oppress him more terribly than the wreck of his own future, the loss of his liberty, or the unmerited condemnation of his fellow-men. Come what might afterwards, she would send him away with the warmth of hope in his heart, with a little spot of blue breaking, though ever so far away, through the black clouds on his horizon.

It was early day yet in both of their lives, and how many times might not the weather change before night?

Till the very hour of the convict's departure for Portland she kept her spirits wound up to this exalted pitch. It was arranged that she and Father Daly should travel to England on the same day, and remain for some little time as near the prison as possible, seeing him as often as was admissible The farewells were thus deferred, and the idea of separation disguised and kept aloof.

Fortunately she was not allowed to see him prepared for departure, the iron fetters fastened upon ankle and wrist by chains that clanked as he walked to the black conveyance waiting for him outside the prison door. As he glanced for one moment at the green distances around Kilmainham, the felon Kilmorey thought that even a prison in Ireland might be sweeter than a prison elsewhere, and asked himself should he ever look on an Irish field again. One more glimpse of Ireland, the bay, the Wicklow mountains struggling through mist, and he was buried in the convict-ship, hurrying away from country, wife, mother, home, people, alike from the happy past and the future that was to have been so bright.

As soon as they were permitted to visit him, Marcella and Father Daly found him in his cell at Portland, a grim stone chamber with a small window, his surroundings a wooden bench for a bed, a small table, and a pitcher of water. He was dressed in prison dress, but he had not as yet settled down thoroughly in this narrow stony space within which he was to wear out all the years of his manhood. He kept walking about the few yards of flagged floor like one who had been detained there by accident and was impatient to get out, the place looking just such as a man might, by chance, spend a bad quarter of an hour alone in, and which he would remember uncomfortably for the rest of his life. It was absolutely impossible to imagine Kilmorey, as he stood, his eye full of fire and energy, his frame vigorous and young, snared in this trap, caged in this hole till death should set him free. Marcella could not believe that such was his fate, though a sob caught her breath when she saw him standing there solitary in his felon's clothes, already barred out from the world of action and defrauded of the light of the sun.

Still, she would not allow herself to break down. She had brought him books, writing-materials, flowers, though it was winter, without asking how much of the comfort of these he would be permitted to

enjoy. During the short visit she persisted in speaking as if his stay here must only be for a week, a fortnight, at most a month. "You can bear it for that little time, Bryan. Soldiers have often to endure as much. And how you will enjoy the comforts of home afterwards! And what a welcome the people will give you! What visits I shall have to pay them all when I go back, telling them how you look, and all about it!"

Bryan, who nursed no delusions, never contradicted her, spoke no word to undeceive her, tried to look as if he shared her hopes and expectations; but it taxed all his strength to restrain his own grief, to conceal that wide-awake despair which possessed him as the moment for the final separation drew near and arrived. Father Daly bade him good-by first, and waited outside for Marcella.

Kilmorey held her in his arms, and at last the half-delirious words of hope froze on the young wife's lips. She seemed to waken suddenly out of a trance. Like one who has been dreaming sweetly of home and sunshine, and is shaken up to confront howling hurricane and shipwreck, she looked wildly round the pitiless stone barriers and clung to his neck. In that moment she was terribly assured that their hands were severed, that she was leaving him there for life. But there was no more time for speech, not an instant to undo the work she had struggled so hard to accomplish. The madness in her soul could find no expression before he himself had put her from him outside the door of his cell, and the bolts had grated and clanged behind her.

Then Father Daly felt that the only way to save her reason was to get her home at once; home to the wide moors and the rolling waves, and all the soothing sights and sounds of nature which, being associated with happier days, might win her round to hope again after the present crisis should have passed.

She followed him meekly and passively, but with such a look of silent despair in her face as made people turn to look at her where she sat in the corner of a railway-carriage or steamer, staring blankly before her, and seeing nothing but rigid stone walls built up between her and the face of the heavens. When the journey was at last at an end, and Crane's Castle reached, she was carried up to her room and laid on her bed, the blinds were drawn, and the servants stepped about softly. Surely this was a dreary house, on the verge of the thundering Atlantic, under the shadow of the hills; in one room a woman whose wits were gone with sorrow; in another, this crushed creature huddled on the bed, unable to turn her face to the light of day.

The little home at Inisheen had been shut up, and Mrs. Kilmorey and her attendant had been removed to Crane's Castle. Miss O'Donovan remained with her friends in Dublin, feeling unequal to the melancholy task of looking after so sad a household as that at Distresna. Faithful Bridget managed as best she could, hoping for the moment when the young mistress would open her eyes again on the daily world, and lift the terrible cloud a bit that hung over the sombre dwelling. Father Daly came and went, his hair somewhat

whiter, and the wrinkles in his pathetic old face deeper than on the day when we first made acquaintance with him.

And every day the people from their cabins among the bogs and mountains besieged the Castle for news of Mr. Bryan and of their darling lady. They had a vivid understanding of the tragedy that had been lived, and was yet to be lived through. Their prayers and their *ululus* rose evening and morning in lonely places, and filled the wide air, seldom disturbed by other noise than the roaring of the waves and the cries of sea-birds. Bare feet were forever on the tracks leading to and from homes and burrowing places undiscoverable by all save those who knew the way. Marcella and Kilmorey had cared to know those ways, and had left the high-roads of the world to find them out; and therefore they were worshipped now in their sorrow by barefooted pilgrims, who knew no other paths through life than these seamy zigzags that led along dreary flats and up to lonesome highlands.

CHAPTER XXV.

THE CONVICT'S WIFE.

When Marcella's fit of prostration gave way, and the vitality of youth lifted her up and set her on her feet again, she looked round in vain for the delusive hope that had carried her so far on her travel of pain. As one short dark winter's day after another dawned and set, and life went on monotonously in the silent house, the hours going and coming with as little variety as the waves that rose and fell with dreary thunder under the garden wall, and leaving as little trace behind them, she realized gradually that this separation was for life. There were no forces in nature, strong and rich in resources though nature might be, great enough to overturn the barriers set up by man against man; no subtleties of the brain of a loving woman sufficiently ingenious to reverse the decrees of a law-making universe intent on securing itself against the encroachments of crime.

Bryan, snatched from the very step of a scaffold, was yet condemned to a kind of death. Shut in his tomb, bound by the cerecloths of a living grave, swathed in the oblivion his friends had consigned him to, an oblivion that blotted his name from the roll of men who could be suffered to live, there was no gentle Saviour to take away the stone from his sepulchre and bid this buried Lazarus arise and come forth. There he must remain, a living soul, immured in a vault till the years should shrivel his face, and extinguish the light of his eyes, and dry up the sap in his veins. At each short visit paid him at long intervals she must expect to find him more worn, more weary, his mind more exhausted with the rebellion of the imprisoned body, or, if less impatient of his restraints then, also less strong to resist the slow blight gradually eating up his manhood.

When she began to resume the duties of her household, as much for the sake of others as to occupy herself, the effort was at first utterly vain; the tasks would drop out of her hands, the entire uselessness and futility of everything stared her out of countenance, and her eyes would suddenly grow blind again to her actual surroundings, and fix themselves with a fascinated gaze on one point in a universe of wrecks and follies, the single dim ray from heaven penetrating a dungeon and lighting up a solitary figure built round with intolerable stone.

Even long walks on the moors and rocks afforded her no relief, such weak yielding to an impulse to escape with her sorrow from all eyes bringing its own punishment. The result was too much time and space for that kind of thinking which attains to no solution of anything, but acts like the welling away of life-blood, leaving a drained heart and a benumbed and bewildered intelligence.

There was too much time and space everywhere for such a small weak creature as herself, and all visible things seemed at pains to enforce this idea upon her, and fix it permanently in her mind.

The wide rolling Atlantic waves that came and went as if out of and into eternity, widening and lengthening with each fresh approach and retreat, the free wandering moors that stretched themselves out immeasurably under the rays of the wintry sun and made paths for their own travelling through the clouds to infinity, alike oppressed her with the invitingness and suggestiveness of their triumphant scope. While she walked swiftly she asked herself why she, and the land, and the water, and the clouds, and the fleet birds, and, above all, the wild breeze, had such limitless powers of going and coming, while the active feet of one who was always in her mind were cruelly tethered within a few square yards of masonry, restrained from even as much movement as the feeble and the aged and the maimed among living creatures may enjoy.

At last the sickening hatred of the liberty of motion which he could not share grew to a sort of madness in her, and she forsook the moors and all out-door life, and shut herself up with Mrs. Kilmorey in the room where the invalid chiefly lived, an apartment overlooking the sea to which the afflicted mother had taken a fancy.

As yet, that poor lady had shown no sign of recovery from her mental disorder, but neither had her madness assumed any unhappy form. It was still her dream that Bryan had escaped away from Ireland at a fortunate moment, and was enjoying to the utmost his travel round the world. Sometimes she fretted a little because he did not write word that he was coming home, but soon forgot this only cause for dissatisfaction. Formerly, Marcella had fled scared from before her smiling face, and the task of inventing pleasant answers to her ceaseless remarks and questions; but now that the girl's own heart-sickness had taken a new turn, and she found a relief in chaining her young limbs within limits as narrow as those that constrained the prisoner whose life in bonds she was trying to follow, she made fresh efforts to amuse the poor woman and to humor her happy imaginations

Letting her mind go with the stream of her companion's delirium, she would pretend for a moment that the mother's delusion was reality, and reality only a nightmare, and would talk about Bryan's travels and Bryan's enjoyment—would even read fragments from Bryan's letters, to which she added passages of her own invention, such as he might have written during an absence under happier circumstances.

She would divert herself and her listener with descriptions of scenery supplied by her own imagination, and with sketches of imaginary people he had met. When the mother talked of his homecoming, which she said was to be expected soon, Marcella humored the fancy, and, with what she felt to be a half-crazy glee, spoke of the preparations that must be made for him at Inisheen, the pleasure he would find in seeing certain improvements which he had wished to be made, and of the jubilee that would be held among the people to welcome him.

But when the pathetic play was played out, and the invalid, soothed and charmed, had relapsed into her cushions to sleep a little, Marcella had then to pay too dearly for the riot of her fancy by the anguish of the reaction from imaginary happiness to intolerable woe.

With her head buried in the foot of the mother's couch, she would kneel with covered face, taking blow after blow as it fell on her heart, afflicting her whole body with physical pain, and then, having borne the shock, she would pass a silent, motionless hour, seeing with her closed eyes into the prison cell, watching Bryan as he paced about his few yards of pavement, trying to look over his shoulder on the page he was reading, scanning the pallor and the lines of his face, striving to speak to him without words, to make her presence known without touch or sound.

In the evening she would recover a little; would sing Mrs. Kilmorey her favorite songs, and help her with her needle-work, and read and talk, and feel a certain satisfaction in the thought that she had passed her day within limits almost as narrow as Kilmorey's own.

This unnatural way of living could not go on very long without leaving a trace upon her appearance; and when Father Daly came in one day he was startled by the look in her face.

"I am tired of walking out alone, Father Daly," she said. "I am trying to realize what it is to live within four close walls."

"I see," he answered. "You are anxious to take away Bryan's last comfort; when the time for your next visit comes round you will not be able to go to him."

"Oh, Father Daly, I am not ill. You don't think I am looking ill?"

"Put on your bonnet and come with me at once for a walk."

She went obediently, her heart throbbing with a new fear. What if she were to be physically incapacitated by mental or bodily illness from paying him those rare visits which even the rigors of the prison law allowed! She owned her mistake to her friend, but pleaded her terror of that melancholy which the widths and lengths of air, water, and earth everywhere enforced upon her.

"Well, now, I have something to propose to you," said the priest. "My little school-mistress over in Ballydownvalley is not very well, and a holiday for change of air would be a blessing to her. I have thought that if you would take her place for a few weeks two people might be benefited."

Marcella hesitated. Grief has its feverishly active phases and its indolent phases. Kilmorey's wife felt herself at that moment inert and helpless.

"Of course, if you cannot think of it, I must try and incur the expense of a paid substitute for her, or, failing that, let the poor child take her chance of falling into confirmed bad health."

"No, no," said Marcella. "I will do it."

"I knew you would," said Father Daly, triumphantly. "You will find it irksome at first; but what you want is to be forced into something that will give you a little trouble quite outside of your own affairs. To be obliged to drive three or four miles in the winter mornings will be annoying, but invigorating; and the effort to keep about fifty brats in order for some hours will rouse you a bit, I can tell you. And besides, my dear, it will be a step towards closer intercourse between you and your people—and his—whom you have been rather neglecting, haven't you?"

"Yes. They have all got away from me into the distance. And when they do come near they seem like ghosts. Only one person is real to me in the world."

"And that one person you must forget for a while. I'll engage you won't get time to think of him during school hours. After I have seen how this works I shall have another little plan to propose to you; but one thing at a time."

At first her new task was distasteful to her. That very fact that she could not get leave to think of him for so many hours was a grievance. The noisy children were like a hive of bees let loose, that swarmed round her head and shut out her view of the sun. But by-and-by she had gained a sort of charmed sway over her tormenters which surprised and pleased her, and she began to individualize the thin, large-eyed faces with their various expressions; to notice that Mary's lips were redder than Nannie's, and Nora's bare feet were smaller and finer than the rest that hung from the benches, and that plain-featured little Bridget always gave her a loving glance which, more than any other, went warm to her heart.

The welcome of the scholars grew to be a distinctly good thing in her day when, on going into the school-house, she found half a dozen young heads with wind-tossed locks bending together over the fire of turf, while one fanned the flame with her scant petticoat, and another pulled the logs this way and that way with her brown fingers to make them burn briskly, that "Herself" might be warmed after her drive. And when in the twilight of a wintry afternoon she was met coming out of the school-house door by a crude, shy deputation of fathers arrived to thank her for her devotion to their children, she felt an unaccustomed glow in her veins, and thought with pleasure that here was something worth telling to Bryan—

something that would interest him and give him a moment's delight.

In this writing to Bryan about it all she began to find her reward. The little world of the school-house, with its various characters and incidents, supplied her with many a long paragraph in her letters to the prison. The humorous scenes that occurred, the comical things that were said, found their way into the pages which occupied her evening after evening; and when Bryan's replies convinced her of the pleasure her pictures and anecdotes had given him, she looked about with eagerness for fresh varieties of every-day life with which to float a breath of fresh air into his solitude.

As with each new attempt to put the life of her world, the little world he knew and loved so well, vividly before him, proved a success, she felt a latent power awake in her, and with an excitement that was almost joy went to work to exercise it for his amusement.

Now she had something to walk out for; a motive in making daily visits to the school even after the young school-mistress had returned with improved health to her post; a distinct reason for seeking out the people in their homes, hearing the tales they had to tell, and witnessing the homely scenes of their lives—scenes in which they gratefully made her a sharer. It was something to rise for in the morning, this search after life-like figures and scenery for her evening sketching in the journal which she now kept regularly for her husband.

Bryan, also, at her request kept a kind of record for her of the details of his prison life, all that could interest without too much afflicting her. Various characters of those with whom he had to associate were drawn for her with a power and skill which called forth her admiration. Sometimes, in reading his letters, her sorrow was almost forgotten in her delight in the vigor and noble temper of his mind, the manliness with which he accepted his misfortune and made the best of his circumstances. There were no complaints, scarcely even a reference to inconvenience and privation. When he failed of subject-matter out of his present life, he went back into his past, and gave her, bit by bit, a sort of history of his own thoughts and experiences and aspirations from his earliest boyhood upward. Absorbed in this intercourse, Marcella wore through the winter months with tolerable calmness. Winter seemed suited to such a life, and lent itself easily to its requirements. The morning letter received, the short dark day spent abroad in the cold air, in the rough wind, among the poor and patient, then the evening fire and lamp, the howling storm and sea outside, and the scrape, scrape of the pen that was carrying her message, expressing the extravagant lovingnesses of her heart, shaping out the humorous or pathetic anecdote which was to make him laugh or thrill the next day, forgetful for a moment of his bonds.

But when spring burst upon her, and the first lark began to sing, then again her life fell in ruins around her. How shape summer with all its glories into any kind of harmony with the tragedy of their two lives?

It was just when winter had breathed its last sigh, and that lark had found a patch of blue from which to hurl down his delirious rhapsody about liberty and joy upon Marcella's heart, that a passage in a letter of Bryan's smote her with a new and sharp anguish.

"I have learned," he wrote, "that as I am looked upon as a well-conducted prisoner, I may hope to be liberated at the end of twenty years—always provided my good conduct continues. Here is something to look forward to, my dearest love. If we both outlive the term we may yet be together."

This, with the first primrose at her foot and new rose-tints on the sea, was too much for the woman who in one winter seemed to herself to have exhausted all the patience and endurance in her nature. Strange that the fixed term of twenty years seemed to her more intolerable than the vagueness of a lifetime. The idea of the lifetime had been hard to grasp, and all sorts of shapeless possibilities were felt to float through its measureless hours like unseen stars through space. But twenty years made a comprehensible period, sickeningly long, calculably ruinous in its workings, with a sharp, set limit that in its very assertion seemed to annihilate any shorter limitations which an extravagant imagination might conjure up.

She asked herself what kind of creature she would have grown to be after the slow, sad passing of those twenty years? Would not the wife to whom he must come forth in that distant day be a woman with faded cheeks—eyes whose lustre was gone—a worn woman with youth long wept away, and no remnant left of the graces which ought to belong to the bride of such a man as Bryan Kilmorey? Oh, why had she, in that mad moment of their tragedy, stretched out her hand to take from him the liberty of even that far future, bound him to herself for time and eternity, shut him off from the possibility of choice in that new day which was still to dawn for him so far ahead, and which might, only for her, have possibly brought him new joys, a fresh beginning of life, happy hours unclouded by such memories and associations as must always hang round her? Ought not his wife to be found among the young glad girls of that future day? Oh, she would have tried not to be jealous of those girls, whose fresh faces would, in that far-off hour, put to shame her own grief-worn, tear-furrowed countenance. She would have withdrawn herself, turned her face to the wall, and left him to find his happiness in forgetting her.

Then it occurred to her, with a strange thrill of mingled relief and anguish, that the Bryan of that day would not be one whom glad girls would be likely to smile upon. He would appear not as a man freed from unjust imprisonment with a stainless name; he would be a convict, the brand of murderer would lie upon him, the long expiation of his supposed crime would arouse no pity, no sympathy among his fellow-creatures; the young, the gay, the glad would shrink from him in horror. Even if disease had not fastened upon him, and he did not come forth stricken, crippled, and prematurely aged, yet there would be no one to welcome him back into the sunshine besides herself; no one but the faded wife to give him her

faithful hand and lead him away to some happy solitude of nature, where the mountains and trees would not gossip over his misfortunes, and the winds would not execrate his name.

There was comfort even in this melancholy thought; and the certainty that the very misfortune which turned, and must always turn, the world away from him, made him more entirely her own, filled her with an eager joy.

Having got over this point in her outlook to the future, she began to realize a little more hopefully that there would, after all, be a future, however far away it might now seem.

And then she began to gather up a few crumbs of comfort and confidence in herself. Perhaps, even if she should have grown old and unlovely, he would still see her the same because of the undying love in her heart. But in the mean time she must not weep all the light out of her eyes; time would be busy enough trying to quench it. From this point of view, even if from no other, despair was her deadliest enemy. By a constant habit of patience, and the encouragement of sweet thoughts, she would baffle the attacks of this foe alike of her present and her future. She would parry its thrusts and escape its disfiguring scars.

With rare visits to the prison, and long weeks spent as close to it as possible, during which they had the sorry comfort of feeling that she was at least near him, and with a trip to a little frequented part of Switzerland, made for the purpose of getting some variety to put into her letters to him, she got through the dreaded summer. Winter brought her back to her old ways at Crane's Castle, and she added some daily hours of study to her former pursuits. And then with the opening up of a new spring came changes.

CHAPTER XXVI.

MIKE'S END.

DURING that winter Father Daly had made trial of his second plan for Marcella's relief, which was the study of the Irish language; and thereby he hung a long tale of the helpfulness towards herself and others which she was to develop out of the acquirement of her native tongue. Having mastered the language herself, she was to instruct the children of the school, who already spoke it, in the mysteries of reading and writing it.

He was to be her tutor, and the good old man was glad of this excuse to spend two or three evenings of every week in that melancholy house by the sea, in the company of two afflicted women who were forsaken by all the world but himself.

He was not a very practical tutor, as the lessons were constantly interrupted by his announcements of various scraps of news which he had picked up and treasured for Marcella, just to vary her thoughts

even for a few minutes. Thus he informed her at various intervals that "The O'Donovan" was staying on a visit at Mount Ramshackle; that Miss Julia O'Flaherty had been married at last to Mr. Jones, the wedding having taken place from a hotel at Scarborough; and, a little later, that Miss O'Donovan was about to become Mrs. O'Flaherty.

To Marcella these items of gossip were the merest far-off echoes of a world of which she had never known much, and had almost forgotten. Old Biddy Malone's toothache was of infinitely more importance to her than the fact that Julia O'Flaherty's bride-cake had, like all the royal bride-cakes, been ordered from Chester. Nevertheless, she had grown to be thankful for any passing idea that made her smile.

For Mrs. Kilmorey Father Daly had always cheery words about Bryan's travels and return, and a store of little jokes to make the poor lady laugh. But he asked her no more for the song of the "Wild Geese," and the harp stood silent in the corner.

One evening, after the usual gay ten minutes which he bestowed on Bryan's mother after his arrival, he pushed away the books which Marcella had opened under the particular lamp which suited his spectacles, and said,

"It is no use trying. I can't work to-night, my dear. My mind's uneasy. A bad fever, a kind of plague, it seems to be, has broken out at Athlogue close to Ballydownvalley, and the people are dying fast. I'm thinking of what we shall do if it comes our way."

Athlogue was a district on the estate of the murdered Mr. Ffont. The people there had long lived in a wretched condition, and since the murder had fallen from bad to worse. The new owner had refused even to visit the estate, and lived in England, and the agent misbehaved himself pretty much as he pleased. The plague that had now appeared was the outcome of slow famine and hardship, and would probably effect many wholesale evictions, carried out without the assistance of the sheriff and police.

The better condition of the peasantry living under Marcella's rule did not save them from the scourge, which, once started, flies over moor and mountain like wildfire, and the fever was soon raging at Distresna.

Marcella's heart quailed as she saw two distinct and conflicting duties confronting her. The doctor, who came from a distance, and had a large district to attend to, stated that the only means of arresting the ravages of the disease were separation and good nursing; and how were these to be effected and procured? The poor-house hospitals were full, and the people hated them besides. There were no Sisters of Mercy within reach. The peasants were deplorably ignorant of the first principles of nursing, and careless of the simplest precautions as to infection. She herself was the only person who could come forward and attempt to bring some sort of order into this confusion of suffering and alarm.

And yet, Bryan! If she were to take the fever and die? Seeing that he had only her, had she any right so to desert him, to risk falling away from his need? Were all these people who had grown to

be so dear to her, were they, all put together, half as precious to her as a single hair upon his head?

Father Daly had tried to be before her thought with his warning. "Remember," he said, "you are to stay where you are, to stand to your post. You are not your own; you are Bryan's. You can give me your advice, and I will carry it out. But we have had tragedy enough in this family. I will not allow you to risk any more."

She had heard him with a sensation of relief; but that night her conduct appeared to her in a different light. Was she Bryan's wife, and yet a coward? God would stand by her in her daring. Her effort, her trust, would win a blessing for both of them. The next day she met Father Daly at the bedside of a sufferer who was "down in the fever."

He saw her courage and faith in her eyes, and did not remonstrate with her. A strong impression that she would be safe took possession of his mind, and from that moment they put their forces together in the work that was at hand.

She had already learned a good deal about nursing from the various attendants of Mrs. Kilmorey in her illness, and now she easily took in the doctor's directions as to the treatment of this particular disease.

Her first care was to have long wooden sheds erected as a kind of temporary hospital, and she spared neither money nor personal attention to fit them with all that was convenient and comfortable for the necessities of the patients. Two or three healthy, strong-hearted girls volunteered as hospital nurses under her guidance, and her old ally Mike constituted himself her chief attendant and assistant, going and coming with her, fetching and carrying for her, and doing no small share of the nursing besides.

For this faithful lad she had grown to feel a special affection, associating him as she did with Bryan's trouble from the very beginning, and knowing that he had done his utmost for him at the trial. She allowed him now to do all that he wished, to think that he accomplished even more than was possible, and to know that she was grateful to him for all.

Soon the aspect of the plague-stricken country was changed. The panic subsided; the suffering were glad to go at once to where "Herself" would take care of them; the houses were kept as free as possible from infection; the deaths were fewer than they had been, and those who died went their way in peace and full of consolation. To no people on earth can death be made so sweetly acceptable as to the faithful among the Irish poor.

In the urgency of the need, in the press of the work, Marcella forgot her personal fears. The belief that God would protect her for the sake of Bryan, who was so good, had strengthened into a conviction that no amount of weariness or anxiety could shake. If Heaven was sometimes mysteriously severe, it was also unquestionably merciful. So large a share of suffering had been laid upon and accepted by him and by her already, that this particular danger would be sure to pass by and leave them entirely unharmed. In-

stead of breaking down under her efforts, she seemed to grow stronger, brighter, more thoroughly alert and alive. She felt a motherly love for her recovered patients, and knew besides that the lessons they had given her in faith and patience were well worth the price she had paid for their lives.

The hospital was at a distance of two miles from Crane's Castle, and stood on a wide stretch of high ground, not near to any habitation. In a small shed close by she and her nurses changed their clothing on coming to the place and before returning home, so that infection might not be carried by their means. Here also she kept the medicines and various necessaries given into her charge by the doctor.

On her way to the hospital in the mornings she was accustomed to meet Mike, who had either passed the night on guard among the sick, or had been busy on the scene of work from daybreak.

Coming to meet her, to know if she had any messages or commissions to intrust to him, he often appeared at a point where the road was met by a narrower one leading to the mountains; and one morning as she passed this bend of the road she looked up the path, while the thought just crossed her mind that Mike was not coming this morning by that way.

She felt pleased that her solitary walk had been so far uninterrupted, as of late this hour had been the only one in which she had leisure to think her own thoughts freely. At the same moment the sound of a shot that came with startling distinctness over the shoulder of a hill was heard by her with a sinking of the heart. That particular sound of the discharge of a gun—not a very uncommon one in a country frequented by sportsmen—always smote her with a shock of indescribable pain. She must evermore associate it with the idea of murder, and with all the horror and disaster that a murder had dragged after it into her life.

Such a shot, though neither Bryan nor she had heard it, had been the signal for the beginning of their irreparable misfortunes.

Looking up at the blue sky, with high-sailing clouds, and at the plume of purple heather stirring upon the brow of the bluff above her, she dismissed that thought, but was sorry to feel sure that some happy bird had in that moment of her thinking been brought low.

Arrived at the hospital, she found that Mike had not appeared there that morning; and after some hours it was felt that he was seriously missed. Nobody had hitherto thought a great deal about his simple services; but now that they were not to be had, their value began to be recognized.

In the afternoon a general fear was expressed that Mike was himself "down in the fever," and a messenger was despatched to the mountain to bring tidings of him.

It was still broad daylight when Marcella set out again on her evening walk homeward. She was feeling grieved for her faithful friend and servant, sure that nothing but illness would have kept him from his post, that to-morrow she would find him on a bed in

the hospital. He was a frail creature, and the fever would carry him off—though not if skill and care could save him Repassing by that crooked point of the cross-roads, she remembered the sound of the shot heard there in the morning, and the pang it had given her, and again she looked up at the bluff above her head. There was the ragged bunch of heather swinging from the verge, only colored a burning crimson now in the glow from the western horizon. She would get up on that breezy rock before the glory faded. What a sweep of valley, mountain, and firmament must be visible from such a vantage-ground. She turned up the by-path and ascended the narrow zigzag that climbed the bluff.

How wild and sweet, how magnificent, and yet how peaceful was the world in which she breathed, on which she gazed! The scents of wild thyme and honey were in the breeze; a plover cried faintly in the distance; a flight of moor-birds winged over the brow of the hill she was climbing, and circled in the upper air; the richest Tyrian dyes never produced colors so deep or so living as the purples, crimsons, rose-reds, ambers, that lay about her, above and beneath, softened, and yet intensified, by the gray of approaching shadows.

If Bryan could see this but for one moment, one little half-hour. She walked a bit across the hill, ascending as she went, fascinated by nature's meanings and mysteries, unwilling to break the spell of the enchantment of the hour. She would have ample time to reach home before nightfall; and even if not? She was at no time afraid to walk the hills and valleys of her little kingdom unattended.

She stood still and rapt for some minutes, looking upward, downward, outward, and then she began to move again, while her wide wandering gaze wavered gradually to what was near her as she stepped. Suddenly, with a sharp cry and pause of her heart's beating, she came to a dead stop, staring at something a few yards away right in her path—a man flat on the ground, arms out-stretched, and ghastly face to the sky.

It was Mike, her trusty friend, shot through the heart, dead as the stones, still and silent as the lonesome mountains that looked down on him!

CHAPTER XXVII.

A WARNING.

THERE was grief and indignation among the people at the news of Mike's cruel murder, or "sudden death," as they called it, speaking under their breath as if they feared the blades of grass at their feet could hear them. Marcella, catching their whispers, told herself that these people must have lived terribly between two mortal fears —dread of the landlord and dread of the secret societies—to have learned this cowardice, they who cared so little for hurt or death. Mike was followed to his grave by true mourners; but there was no loud demonstration on the part of his friends, and nothing was said

about trying to discover the authors of his death. He was put away under the sod, and apparently out of mind, with sighs and shudders; but even his own family mentioned him no more.

Marcella, having questioned some of the people on the subject, but without getting any satisfactory answer, asked Father Daly the meaning of this unnatural state of things. Was the murderer one among themselves? and had friends and neighbors agreed by common consent to condone the crime?

"Hush!" he said, "it is enough for me to speak loudly when I denounce the murderer from the altar, but it will be safest for you to be silent in the matter. Neither friend nor neighbor could do any good by lamenting over poor Mike's untimely fate. The same hands that with one blow struck Mr. Ffont—who, God forgive me for saying it, had worked hard to earn his fate—and struck your husband for defying the power that moves those hands, have felled this harmless lad. Doubtless he was marked from the first moment when he ventured to warn you of Bryan's danger, and told off as ripe for death after he gave his evidence on the trial. We have had a visitor or visitors in the country, it seems, unknown to us. Let me entreat you, my dear, to do nothing to provoke their attentions, to be silent on dangerous subjects, and to be careful how you go and come."

Marcella, appalled at such a view of the case, struggled a while with her impulse to cry out, to condemn, to warn; but remembering her helplessness as a woman, and Bryan's dependence on her, lowered her voice, and was careful in her movements, and acknowledged herself at last to be a coward.

"For they would strike a woman," she said to herself. "Those who would harm a poor simple youth like Mike would strike a woman. And I cannot deny that I want to live for Bryan. I braved the fever for the sake of the saving of many, but I am powerless here; and Mike is already gone beyond my help."

She did not, however, alter her usual course of conduct, persisted in the discharge of her self-imposed duties, and hung out no signals of fear.

Mike had been in his grave a month, and the fever was abating; September brought cold, fresh weather, unfavorable to the spread of the scourge, and there was hope that it would have quite disappeared before winter.

One night Marcella had sat up later than usual to finish the letter that, whatever the labors of the day might be, was unfailingly posted to Bryan. She had had much to tell him lately, and as she sat now alone with lamp and fire she told him that she felt with relief that winter was coming back, and that the sweet airs he could not breathe with her, and the brilliant scenes he could not behold with her, were going, and would soon be gone; she felt nearer to him as she was now, shut in a room, all her mind concentrated on her thought of him; even the sighing of the night wind—

What the night wind had to do with her fancies remained untold, for suddenly glancing up, she knew not from what cause, she saw the figure of a man coming into the room. She was sitting in the

library, a room somewhat removed from the others in the house; the table and the fire were between her and the door. Scarcely believing the evidence of her senses, she stared at the figure, saw that it was totally strange to her, that all the middle part of the face was blackened over so that the features could not be recognized, and finally that it was advancing towards her.

She glanced at the clock on the mantle-piece. It was half an hour past midnight, and the servants had all been in bed for two hours at least. In the midst of the confusion of her sudden alarm she realized that there would be no use in calling for help even if her voice would come. If this meant death, then it must be death; yet if she could keep her senses—

The man had advanced to the table at which she had been sitting, and stood at the other side of it leaning towards her, his long, light-colored eyes gleaming horribly out of the blackened face. Marcella had arisen as he drew near, with an attempt at defiance, and clinched her hands on her breast, striving to force back the sob of terror that broke from her. With a flash she saw Mike lying with the wound through his heart. She was Bryan's wife, and they were coming to punish her for having stood by him. And he would be left alone, unless she could use her wits. But with this struggle in her throat, how?

She kept her eyes all the time unflinchingly on his with an instinctive assurance that if she withdrew them an instant he would stretch out the cruel claw-like hands that supported him as he leaned across the table towards her, and would strangle her. Where had she seen those hands before? Her mind wandered back, as in a sort of delirium, to the trial, to the witness-box. No, she would not swoon; she would try to speak; she would not scream—

And then, after enduring this dreadful madness of gazing and battling for sane thought for a full minute, which seemed like years, she heard the man begin to speak, not ferociously, but in a quiet, reassuring, reasoning tone of voice.

"Don't be so frightened, lady," he said, "I'm no burglar, and I mean you no harm—that is, not unless you force it from me. I have come here to talk to you about business. Come, lady, I know you have pluck. Drink this glass of water, here quite handy, as if you were expecting me, and sit down and attend to what I am going to say to you."

Marcella drank the water, hoping that it would give her back her voice, and almost thankful to him for suggesting it. Then she sat down and made a great effort to gather up her wits so as to defend Bryan's property — that is, her own life, and all the comfort and service which that otherwise worthless life must mean for him.

Presently she was amazed to hear her own voice speaking rationally and quietly in the terrible silence of the room.

"If you wanted me on business," she said, "why did you not come in daylight like an honest man? I am here every day to see all who come."

"Thank you, but that would not suit me at all. My business is

not ordinary business. I have come from them that have their own ways of working. Lady, you have got a warning lately. You met with something in your path that you did not like."

The lowered voice and insinuating tone emphasized the last words. O God! he was hinting at the murder of Mike. Her blood curdled as she saw again that white face staring up through the heather at the sky. So should she be found one day; and who would dare to tell Bryan?

"Now, lady, we don't want any more blood in this matter if we can help it; but maybe we will not be able to help it if we find people stupid and obstinate. I come from them that are bound to work their will, not for your sake or my sake, but for the sake of the great cause."

"I am waiting to hear what you want me to do," said Marcella, mechanically.

"Well, lady, your husband, Mr. Bryan Kilmorey, belongs to us. That's one thing I have got to put before you. Once one of us, always one of us. He thought to shake us off, and he was punished. Death was the punishment due to him; but an accident came in the way, and in a matter of a handful of years—twenty, eighteen, maybe fifteen—who knows?—he'll be out on the world again. And, lady, he'll want something to do. The pretty, genteel world he wanted to belong to will have nothing to say to him. Let him return to us, and we will rub out old scores. What you've got to do now is to swear to me, and to give it to me in writing, that you will use your influence with him. It's well known to us that you write to him pretty often, and that you're the kind of a wife that sticks to a man like glue—that you will win him over for us, so that when he comes out of his prison he will be one of us again."

"Never!" said Marcella.

"Ah, I thought you would say that at first, for you are a plucky one—I always said so; but I am going to give you plenty of time to think the matter over. It's a matter of life and death to you; but you won't mind that so much as some of your sex would do—for their own sakes, I mean. But when you come to consider of it, you'll think a good deal about all that you'll bring upon Bryan Kilmorey by refusing. When you are gone, he'll sit there in his prison cell—a hell of a place, I can tell you—a desperate man; and by the time he comes out he'll have worked himself mad. And so we'll be pretty likely to get him, without any thanks to you. The law has condemned him as one of us, and the world believes he belongs to us; and he'll find out he may as well have the game of it, seein' he's got the name of it. You and him can both be useful to us, but he's the one we want. We can do without you. So now you know what I mean, lady. As it is, you've been rather in our way for some time back. We have a score running up against you since the night you hid Kilmorey. At present you stand between us and the people here; you've got a lot of work in you, and we could make you very useful; but if you won't change your hand, and work for us, you'll have to go."

"I must go, then."

"No, you needn't. I have my orders, and I shall obey them; but it's part of my business to tell you that we would rather not meddle with women if we can avoid it. As I said, you are going to get time to think about it. We do nothing without plenty of warning. You have ten days from this time to turn it all over in your mind. On the tenth day, when night comes, you will put a light in your bedroom window, a bright light to burn all night, so that it can be seen; and I will—no, I will not come here again, trust me for that—but I will contrive to meet you somewhere, and to get that promise in writing from you. And I will have means of knowing, too, whether you keep your word—"

"And if I make no sign?"

"Well, I would rather not speak uncivil to a lady; but in case of obstinacy you will be likely, sooner or later, to—meet with a bad accident."

"I suppose this is all you have to say for the present," said Marcella, struggling to control the expression of her horror. "If it is, I will ask you to leave me for a time."

"I'm going," said the intruder; "but I must say before I go that you are a plucky one, lady. I was afraid I might have frightened you to death. And I don't want to hurt you—not if I can help it. I'm only doing my duty and obeying my orders. You'll learn to do the same before long, if you are wise. Good-night."

Marcella saw him withdraw from the other side of the table, turn and glide away, she did not see where. Her eyes, released from gazing at him, grew suddenly dim, and she groped her way to a door near her with but one thought, that she would escape to her room before the reaction after her fierce effort at control should set in and might take away her senses. To wake from a swoon here, alone, in the dead of night, with the recollection of this horror staring her in the face, might overturn her brain. Safe in her bedroom, she locked the door, and flung herself on the bed, feeling secure for the moment, if not yet capable of thinking.

Her first clear thought in the matter was that she would write to Bryan and ask his advice, his guidance as to her conduct; he would know how she ought to deal with these people. Whatever he directed her to do she would do. The next thought that came to her was that she must do no such thing, that she would not even hint to him of what had happened. His anxiety for her might lead him to think of temporizing with the fiends, thus entangling himself, through her, inextricably in their toils. By telling him, she could only fill him with alarm and cruel agony of mind, causing him to fear every moment, throughout the long monotonous moments that made up the prisoner's day and night, for her safety. She would take counsel with Father Daly only. She would fight out this battle for her husband, and for herself, alone.

As soon as possible she hastened to the priest and related her extraordinary story. The old man stood aghast at the dilemma in which he saw her placed. He was dazed and horrified. He had no expedient to suggest, no advice to offer.

"They mean what they say," he said, walking about his little parlor, where his breviary lay open on the table, showing where he had been interrupted in his reading, "and they generally do what they threaten; not always, perhaps, but generally."

"Not always?" asked Marcella, tremblingly.

"Sometimes their only object is to frighten; but I am terrified for you—terrified, terrified. I can only think of getting you away out of this—"

"Would that do any good?" said Marcella. "It seems to me that if they want me they will follow me—anywhere. I have got the impression that if I try to escape they will be the more bent on having me. I fancy that the only thing that seemed to soften that wretch towards me was what he called my 'pluck.' If I stand my ground I have a chance; if I run, I am lost—"

"Yes, you are right; they admire courage. It is the only virtue they have any longer a conception of. Oh, my lost sheep, my men who ought to have been soldiers!" cried the old man, throwing up his trembling hands. "When will the Lord lift the pall that hangs over this unhappy country?"

Then, recovering himself and returning to the urgent question of the moment, he went on:

"And yet I must think about guarding you. I could smuggle you into a convent, where you could live as one of the nuns—"

Marcella shook her head. "I feel that it would be no use," she said. "The moment I tried to come out again they would meet me on the threshold; that is, if they are in earnest. If they are not, why I should only be wasting my time, and neglecting my duties here."

"In the mean time, at all events, I will put you under the care of the police."

"I will not have the police," said Marcella. "I will not be followed about as if I were an evicting bailiff or an inhuman landlord. Father Daly, the more I think about this, the more clearly I see that my only chance is quietly to ignore their threats. Even in the hope of ultimately persuading me to their ends, of utilizing my 'pluck' for their own purposes, they may let me live a little longer. I will not temporize, I will not hold out a straw to them, but I will go my own way, and take the chances that are in my favor. If, even after five years' persuasion, I could be induced to yield and take their oath, think how useful my money would be to them. They will hope, perhaps, to weary me out with fear—"

"And, my poor child, are you strong enough to live with such a sword over your head?" asked the old man, taking her warm hand in his own cold ones, and looking pityingly in her eyes.

"I do not know. Who can tell how much he can suffer till he tries? Perhaps, if it were a question of myself alone, I should commit myself to God and say, 'Let it be ended quickly, whatever is to be the end!' But—"

"Yes," said Father Daly, as the look of almost stern resolve left her brows, and her lips quivered—"yes, the whole of it is in that

'but,' I know. Then may Heaven assist you, my dear, and inspire you in every step you take, for it seems to me I have come to the end of my helpfulness!"

During the ten days that followed that midnight visit Marcella went her way exactly as usual, and when the night of the tenth day arrived she retired to bed early, locking her door and leaving her room in darkness. It surprised her to find that the terror she had expected to feel on this night, more than all others, did not, after all, assail her. Feeling that she had decided as best she could, and that the die was cast, she fell asleep from sheer weariness, the entire bodily collapse that often follows on a long strain of suspense and excitement.

The next day she arose refreshed, wondering at her own fearlessness, cheerfulness, almost gayety of spirit. Now that her course was finally taken, she knew by the sense of relief that underlay her good spirits that she must have been in danger of turning coward, and of ruining Bryan's after-life by her weakness. Even if she died, and she did not feel that she was going to die, she would have done nothing to compromise him or his future. Almost before breakfast was over Father Daly appeared.

"I knew you would be off to the hospital as usual," he said, seeing her hat and gloves on the table, "and I have come to be your escort. For the future you must have some one with you wherever you go."

"What use, what use, Father Daly?" cried Marcella, drawing on her gloves. "*You* are always welcome, but I do not change my habits one iota. My mind is made up."

Her eyes were sparkling, and a little red spot was on one of her cheeks. She laughed as she tripped down the steps before him. Then she turned grave for a moment as she looked back at him and saw his anxious face.

"I have said my prayers, Father Daly, and what matter about the rest? *Something* is going to take care of me, I know; else how could I feel so blithe when there is everything against me?"

Father Daly answered nothing except by taking her hand and placing it on his trembling arm with an air of protection; as he went along he found himself almost tottering. He realized for the first time that old age had come upon him. It was a fresh, bright September day, the birds were singing with that spontaneous after-burst of song which breaks from them when the heats of summer have gone away. The purple coloring of the heather was at its perfection; the shining silver of the sea was subdued by soft gray lines, the moors were at their tawniest and loveliest. When they had walked about half a mile, a man met them at a turn of the road and appealed urgently to the priest to come with him at once up the mountain, where a person lay suddenly dying who had something afflicting on his mind.

The priest stood still with a shock of disappointment. Why could he not fulfil first the task he had undertaken of conducting Marcella safely to her destination? He hesitated, and the messenger re-

newed his entreaties. It was an urgent case, a desperate case. There was not an hour, not a second to be lost. After a minute's struggle and a short prayer, Father Daly's hesitation was over. His priestly duty lay up the mountain road. The angels must take care of Marcella.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

A BREAK IN THE CLOUDS.

As Father Daly turned back when a few perches up the path, and saw her waving her hand to him, he remarked within himself that he had never seen her look so fair and sweet as on this particular morning. She wore a very dark blue dress, many shades darker than the heather, with something crimson in her hat, and the old man's thought was that she had improved during the last few months, that Bryan had never seen her look so well as this. The idea of danger hovering round her had made him notice her more closely than usual. She was as dear to him as his own grandchild might have been. Nothing but the impossible alternative of allowing a troubled soul to go into eternity unprepared and unshriven would have drawn him at that moment from her side. But as he turned away and lost sight of her, he felt himself suddenly sharing her happy presentiment. "She is right," he thought. "*Something* will undoubtedly take care of her!"

Marcella went on her way with no abatement of her unusually good spirits. The effort to reassure Father Daly had reacted upon herself, and all realization of danger had left her. She walked quickly, but not as though she were nervous, or running out of anybody's way. At the next turn of the road she saw a car and horse standing, as if waiting for some one, and she noticed as she passed that she did not know the driver, who was standing by the roadside while the horse munched the grass, idly plucking at the tips of the lance-like leaves of the withering flag-lilies. At her approach he averted his face and almost turned his back upon her.

At this point her way left the road and struck out over a piece of vividly colored moorland, skirted by black bog on the side where it swept across to the mountains. About half a mile along this level strip of land she could see the wooden walls of her hospital catching the gleam of the sun; but the intervening space between her and them was lonely in the extreme. There was not a cabin nor a living thing in sight. So well known was it to Marcella that its loneness did not strike her. It was simply an interesting bit of her daily walk, in which the landscape always took a peculiarly pathetic expression. A little farther on there was a wide, dark pool of irregular shape, with ragged edges, into which the high-sailing clouds kept looking down as they passed, giving an air of mournful animation to the solitude.

Just before coming to this pool, by the edge of which her path

was to lead her, she suddenly stood still, fancying she saw a figure lurking behind one of the short, dark bushes. Then she walked on a few paces, thinking she was, after all, more nervous than she had admitted herself to be, since she was seeing mysterious figures in every bush in her path. Another moment, and it was beyond doubt that her fancy had played her no trick. A man was crouching on the ground behind that clump of thorn, and her eye had caught momentary sight of the muzzle of a gun.

In an instant she remembered the waiting car, the threats of her midnight visitor, and concluded that her daring had ruined her. With an unuttered prayer in her heart she remained standing quite still. She was well within range of the assassin's gun, if assassin this should be, and to turn to fly or run about wildly would only be to provoke his anger and hurry his work. A few seconds passed, during which she seemed to have lived a century. What was he waiting for? Why did he not fire? Her mind was becoming active again, recovering from the first shock. She looked and listened intently, and presently saw the crouching figure stir. It did not try to rise, but stirred with a writhing movement; and in an instant it flashed upon her that this was not a person who could injure her, but one who was in need of her help. Getting to the other side of the bush, she saw that the man half hidden there was lying on his face in an attitude of mortal pain, and that the gun she had perceived was not grasped in his hand, but was resting harmlessly against a sturdy stem of a stunted tree in the thicket.

Making up her mind, from several signs she had learned to know well, that this was a case of the fever, she hurried back to the point of the road where she had seen a car waiting. The driver was still standing where she had left him, but stared at her strangely as she approached. She explained quickly that a man was lying ill about fifty yards away, and that she hoped he would convey him to the hospital.

"I am engaged," he answered, "I am waiting for my fare. I cannot leave this spot."

"It will not keep you long," she pleaded. "You may still be in time for your fare."

He stared at her again still more strangely, and gave a look up the road by which she had come. Then he stood a few moments irresolute, and finally took his horse by the head and began leading it over the rough moorland, where there was no way for a car, only a foot-path.

"The joltin' will ruin my springs," he grumbled, but still he followed her.

When they came to the spot where the man lay, they found him turned on his back, with his flushed face thrown upward. He seemed to have fallen into a stupor. The driver, on seeing him, made a curious exclamation, and appeared so bewildered that Marcella feared he had taken fright of the fever, and was going to run away.

"I implore you, for God's sake," she said, "to do this act of char-

ity. The man will die if he is neglected longer. He has been ill with the fever for many hours. And it is not so contagious as you suppose—"

Then the man with the car swore a great oath which scorned the dread of contagion, and ended in a muttering about this being an extraordinary business. Marcella admitted that truth in her heart, but she did not betray the fact that she had recognized the face, and still more the hands, of the creature for whose life she was pleading. She saw him lifted and laid across the car, and then got up beside him and held him that he might not fall off; while the driver led the horse as before, till they stopped at the door of the hospital sheds.

It was a case of fever of the most virulent type. As soon as the patient was in bed and had been attended to for the moment, Marcella went to look for the driver of the car. He had disappeared, and no one had noticed in what direction he had gone. A careful messenger was sent to search for the gun, which was probably loaded, and had been forgotten at the bush, but no such thing was anywhere to be found.

Nobody had any knowledge of the patient whom "Herself" had picked up on the roadside. His features were strange to every one. Patients, nurses, friends of the patients—all declared they had never beheld him before. Only Marcella recognized him.

When, a few hours later, Father Daly had come to the hospital to look for her, to assure himself that she had not suffered from his necessary desertion of her in the morning, he looked at the sick man with pitying interest, and remarked that his face was entirely unknown to him. What opinion had the doctor given about him? he questioned. A poor, gaunt, frail-looking creature, he seemed pretty sure to die. What a pity he had not fallen into helpful hands before delirium set in! It was sad to think that his friends could not be communicated with.

The doctor's opinion was a bad one. Marcella walked up and down outside the hospital with Father Daly, and talked about this new case which powerfully interested her. There was a strained look of excitement in her eyes, but Father Daly was not observant enough to see it. She had been gay and hopeful in the morning, he found her active and strong-hearted now. He noticed no subtle change in her, did not guess that anything extraordinary had occurred in the mean time, that any crisis in her life had arrived which she was taxing all her energies to meet. While he talked, she was asking herself whether she would dare to tell him of her overwhelming discovery. Her heart was beating so fast that she drew her breath in long inspirations occasionally; her hands were trembling; it was only by walking about that she could hold down the inclination to laugh, to cry, to weep. No, she dared not tell Father Daly. He would bring the police about the place immediately and scare away this cowardly soul into the other world before she had had her chance to wait and watch for the saving words which her hope assured her he could speak for her. She would not tell any

one yet who was lying in that hospital bed, who it was that Providence had delivered into her hands.

"I am going to nurse this patient myself," she said. "It is an interesting case. The doctor says that nothing but the greatest care can save him. We are all good nurses here, but they say I am the most—"

"Not at night," began the priest.

"Yes, at night, till he is over the worst. Now, Father Daly, shall I not be safer here than anywhere else? Nobody would come to shoot me here. I know that this is the best place for me at present, so please don't say that it isn't."

From this resolution Father Daly could not move her. It was the best place, the safest place in which she could hide herself now. So she argued, and he was obliged to agree with her.

The days were shortening, the September evenings lengthening. When night came on she sent the other nurses to rest; even the man who was always in waiting in case of emergency was dismissed to have some sleep within call, and Marcella took her place alone as night-watch. Father Daly had undertaken to write her daily letter to Bryan for her, in such a way as not to alarm him. She would not risk writing to him from beside a fever-bed. Oh, what news might she not have to write to him before a month, a week, if Heaven would only be on her side! She wrapped her shawl closely around her, and tried to still the trembling of her body and soul as the vivid realization of this chance, this opportunity that had drifted to her feet, and might drift on past her, never to return, seized and shook her like the paroxysm of a physical disorder.

After midnight the patient opened his eyes and began to rave, and Marcella fell on her knees and listened to every word, as if life or death were to be decided by his delirious outpourings. They were only the disjointed utterance of an evil conscience, revealing nothing except the confused images and memories of a darkened mind. Once she heard the name Kilmorey uttered with an oath, but no words of any meaning followed it. Her strained ears were rewarded with not a single sentence that could promise her the remorse and confession for which she hoped. Before daybreak she was obliged to summon the strong man always in attendance to control physically the frenzy of the patient which she was powerless to soothe, and fled out on the moor in the breaking dawn to wrestle with her impatience, to cry aloud to Heaven for a light to guide her in this cruel emergency.

If he should die in her hands without one sane word! Never had her faith and courage been so tried as now. How was she to remain quiet and trustful in God's providence through all the hours that were to decide whether her new-sprung hope was a beacon light or only a wandering fire that would flicker maddeningly and go out? By prayer alone—and if in her prayer she raved, why, Heaven would have pity on her, would know all she had wanted to say, and forgive everything that she ought not to have said. The sight of sunrise seemed to give her new hope, and she went back

with outward calm to take up her watch again at the stranger's bedside.

The people around began to wonder at her exceptional interest in this particular case of the sickness. Seeing the surprise in their eyes, she tried to account for it, saying that this was a stranger; that no one knew his friends; that it would be especially sad were he to die without giving some clew to them. The doctor told her that she was foolish, was wearing herself out; that he had never counselled her acting as a night-nurse. He noticed a change in her strength, and would not answer for the consequences if she were now to catch the fever, which hitherto she had so wonderfully escaped.

Father Daly exhorted, commanded, marvelled. It seemed to him she had neglected her duties at home, her care of Mrs. Kilmorey, her own health, forgotten even Bryan himself, in her extravagant solicitude for the life of this ill-looking stranger whom chance had dropped into her hands. For all answer to his entreaties she simply shook her head and kept her place. There was something working within her which he failed to see or touch. He began to think that her extraordinary action was due to panic; that she had got a dread of her home, a fear of being attacked there; that in reality she felt safer at this bedside than anywhere else.

And yet such sudden unreasoning terror coming so quickly upon her former almost reckless daring perplexed him. A fear grew within him that the long strain upon her was telling terribly at last, and that her mind was becoming a little astray.

This thought startled him cruelly one evening when she put her hand on his arm at parting, and looked in his face, and said,

"You will not be out of the way when the crisis is near? I am anxious about this man's confession."

"My dear," he said, gently, "am not I, too, anxious always for such poor souls?"

"Yes, I know, I know; but the doctor thinks he may die without being able to speak."

"If he does, it will be sad," he replied. "We must pray for him."

"Yes, pray for him, and pray for me," she said, urgently. "The crisis is expected about an hour after midnight."

"Then I will be here."

She gave him a piteous look and wrung her hands together, as if his promise was powerless to give her comfort.

"Oh, Father Daly, if I dared to tell you!"

"Yes, for Heaven's sake tell me. What is troubling you?"

She swayed backward and forward, with her hands pressing each other. Her whole body expressed at once her longing to speak and her effort to be silent. At last she conquered her agitation and looked him steadily in the face.

"No, I will not tell so long as there is a hope for his life. Now go, Father Daly. But you will come back? You will be here?"

That night after midnight the crisis was past, and the patient lived. With the glimmer of a smile on her lips, a pale light on her brows,

as if an angel's wing had passed across her face, she signed to Father Daly to depart and leave her alone with her work. Entirely baffled, he went home marvelling, while Marcella sat motionless at her post, scarcely daring to breathe as the hours went past and the patient lay wrapped in a life-giving slumber.

The scourge had been abating for some time past, and all the other cases now in the hospital were convalescent. The present patient had been put in a shed by himself, and his nurse was alone as she watched through that night by his bed. A small shaded lamp burned in a corner, so that the light could not reach him, and Marcella sat in an arm-chair wrapped in a large rug, her wide-open eyes fixed on the window, beyond which a star was visible between the dividing folds of the curtain. She dared not let her thoughts run before the present moment; all her mind was concentrated in endurance. When morning came she stole away and took measures to insure the continuance of quiet, so that the long slumber of the sufferer might not be prematurely broken; then she lay down to rest in a spot close by appropriated to her own use. Late in the afternoon he still slept, and Marcella, having recovered her strength a little, seated herself, refreshed, by his bed as before.

A red-gold beam from the sunset fell on her as she sat with some needle-work in her hands. Her face was a little pale, but fair and cheerful under her nurse's cap; her fingers did not tremble as she plaited the muslin frills of the apron she was making for one of her girls. There was a strange sweetness on her downcast eyelids, the after-gleam of much prayer, the sign of a faith that can live while waiting upon hope. So the patient saw her when he first unclosed his eyes and looked around him. Before she chanced to glance up and towards him he shut his eyes again, and pretended still to sleep while observing her.

After a while she was conscious that he was awake and watching her, but by no sign did she betray that she was aware of being so studied. Out of the corners of his narrow eyes he took note of the expressions flitting across her face, so pure and still under its snow-white head-dress, the patient movement of her hands, the dainty touch with which she adjusted the niceties of her work with her fine finger-tips. He admired her graceful figure, with the square white apron smoothed across her breast. Accustomed to be watchful and suspicious, he saw nothing in the picture before him to suggest any but the most soothing thoughts. At first he did not know her, could not imagine where he was; but when she raised her eyes, with their wide, peculiar glance, then he recognized her.

Not until the next morning did he admit that he was conscious of what was going on around him; and in the mean time he watched and took note of everything with the wariness of a detective.

As Marcella came and went, hovering near with all that was needed for his comfort, bringing him nourishment with her own hands, placing a few late flowers where his eyes could see them, shading the light and hushing every sound that could disturb him, she was all the time nervously aware that she had been placed upon her trial, that

she was undergoing a searching examination, and that presently, not by looks only, but by words, difficult perhaps to answer, would she be called on to betray herself, and to confess her recognition of the identity of this enemy who had been so strangely delivered into her hands. And thus to betray herself might frustrate the efforts she was making, and had yet to make.

She controlled herself to meet with a pleasant smile of encouragement those treacherous eyes that had so sickened her with horror when she had first seen them in the witness-box, to place her bounties without shuddering in those cruel hands that had filled her with such fear. She tried to forget for the moment what he was; to be the nurse only, the almoner of Heaven's mercy; to win his gratitude by her service; to touch his conscience, if he had one, by her goodwill.

On the third day of his slow convalescence he found himself strong enough to ask the questions which the cunning of his mind had been arranging even before his voice was able to articulate them.

"You are very good to me," he said, "and I want to know why? I have been wondering how I came to be here."

She had just set down the vessel from which he had taken food, and was standing with the light on her face so that he could observe her.

"You were found ill and unconscious on the moor. You had caught the fever. Of course we brought you here."

"Who found me?"

"I found you on the way here one morning. I saw that you were a stranger overtaken on your journey by the sickness. We have had a great deal of the sickness in this part of the country. You have had it very badly."

He watched her narrowly all the time she was speaking, and when she had finished he drew a breath of relief.

"Yes, I am a stranger here," he said; "I was walking this part of the country for my holiday. I am employed in Dublin as a clerk, and I do not often get a holiday. I had got a shooting license, and I had my gun. What has become of my gun?"

"I thought I saw one near you, but I was so busy with you that I did not mind it. I tried to save it for you afterwards, but when I sent to look for it, nobody could find it. I am afraid it must have been stolen. I hope it was not a valuable gun."

"Well, it was worth a good deal to me. Still, I am lucky to have got off with my life. I suppose this is the hospital I heard about, put up by Mrs. Kilmorey for the fever? It was a capital idea. Only for it I'd be dead." Presently he added, "Are you one of the nurses?"

"Yes."

"You are not the same as the others. You look like a lady."

"I am Mrs. Kilmorey."

"Nonsense. You're joking with me. Catch her putting herself in the way of infection! Ladies don't do that when they can help it."

He turned his head away impatiently, as if annoyed at being jested

with, and Marcella arranged his pillows without another word, and went and sat down at a little distance with her work. She was afraid to look up, or almost to breathe for some time after, fearful of betraying her satisfaction. In this first encounter she knew she had got the advantage. He believed that she had not recognized him, that he was as yet safe and unsuspected, and might remain where he was to get well without fear of detection. Let her now encourage his feeling of security. She must not for one moment relax the effort to hide the terror, disgust, and impatience with which the sight of him inspired her, but rather try to subdue and ignore those feelings, so as to do the work she had appointed to herself in a Christian spirit. The meaning of the words, "Do good to those that hate you," came to her for the first time with clearness and force in all its difficulty. She would give him her charity, striving to forget what he was. That was the utmost she could attain to.

Meanwhile the enemy did not hate her. He felt himself secure for the time, quite unknown to and unrecognized by her. After all, why should he have been afraid of detection? In her excitement and trouble during the trial she had probably not been observant; besides, he had then been shaven and close-cropped; now his hair was long, and his beard had grown; and in this place it was not likely that any attempt would be made to interfere with either. On the night when he had gone to frighten her in her home, his face had been disguised beyond all possibility of identification. It was evident, at all events, that she had no distrust of him. With all her pluck, and she was a brave one, she could not have concealed some sign of such a feeling, had it existed in her mind, neither could she by any possibility have behaved as she was behaving. The police would have been at his bedside, the magistrates would have been watching him; but now it seemed that nobody was taking any heed of him but herself. Was it only that she was consoling her sad heart with deeds of charity, as the people said of her? He had heard there were women in the world of that order who, when their own hearts were broken, could only get along by serving, tending, saving others who were in pain.

He was not altogether an ignorant man, and only for certain misfortunes, ill-taken, in his youth, might never have been a criminal; yet these thoughts surprised him, coming to him with each long, stealthy look at Marcella's face, as ideas come to a reader off the printed page of a book. He began to feel it a distinct pleasure to see her sitting near him, a pleasure such as he had never felt since the days long ago, in another life, perhaps, when he might have been, when he probably was, good. He was too callous to hate her because he had done her harm, neither had he any fear of her because of a power she might possibly possess to harm him. He had run a risk of that, but it was over now. He would soon be strong enough to rise up at any moment he pleased and disappear from this place. There was nothing to stay him but the resistance which might be made by those bountiful womanly hands, no one to oppose

him but a creature whom he could in a moment fell with a blow; and it pleased him to think he would rather not injure her, that possibly he might never have to do so now.

No, he would not go away just yet. He would prolong the pleasure of getting well in such hands. Even for his own security, and that of those who employed him, it was desirable that he should not move too soon. He asked her to read to him, for the luxury of hearing her voice. He would exact every attention that his sickness entitled him to receive He could never in his life have such a chance again, and he would enjoy it now to the utmost. He paid little heed to the sense of what she read, only lay seeing dim visions of what good men's lives might be who had women like this to love them and care for them.

Marcella, fulfilling her tasks and seeing him get stronger every day, began to grow sick with fear of the hour when he might be strong enough to defy her. Her dream of touching his heart and conscience began to fade. Could she expect a man like this to turn round and denounce himself, to betray the organization of which he was the tool, unless life were, in any case, over for him—nothing to be looked for but death? Was he really going to get completely well, and had the doctor been deceived? Would she have to entrap and betray him herself into the hands of justice, after saving and serving and cherishing him? She began to suffer from an intolerable fear that she had been wrong from the first in this affair; that she ought to have declared her knowledge of his identity while he lay too ill to struggle; ought to have stationed the police at once round his sick-bed. In that case he might, on recovering, have avenged himself by still withholding the confession that would redeem Bryan; but at least her evidence of his attack upon herself would go far to prove that the secret society had really been Kilmorey's enemy, and that her husband was, as he had protested, the victim of a plot. If this was the utmost she could hope to obtain by his arrest now, how cruel she had been to herself, how needlessly she had aggravated her own sufferings in the matter. She began to watch him with a new anxiety, dread of his too speedy recovery, and to ask herself how soon she ought to call on Father Daly to share her secret and her responsibility, to give her his countenance and advice.

Yet the convalescent was certainly gaining less strength than might have been expected as a result of the abundant care that had been bestowed upon him. He did not appear to have got cold, and yet he coughed incessantly. Of this, however, he did not himself take any heed, was quite satisfied with his own progress, felt that he would only too soon be able to rise up and depart out of this place, in which thoughts had come to him that would have to be banished as soon as he had power to turn his back upon the comfortable walls which had sheltered him.

At last one night a sort of scare came over him, a fear that some fatal supernatural change had been wrought in him by the gentleness of this woman, a change ruinous to his own interests and to the

interests of the society to which he belonged, and he resolved to save himself on the instant by escape.

He got up in the night, dressed himself, easily took possession of all that was his own, and stole noiselessly out of the place. As the few sick now remaining in the hospital were all on the way to recovery, the night-watch was not very strict, and no one observed that the man was gone till morning dawned. Then Marcella, coming in to look to the needs of her patient, found the bed empty, and the criminal whom she ought to have secured and given up to justice fled.

The discovery caused a sensation in the hospital, and Marcella's dismay passed unnoticed in the general surprise. The ingratitude of the creature in thus disappearing without saying "thank you" to any one disgusted the other patients and angered the nurses. All agreed that if he died of the sudden change from the comforts that had surrounded him to the freezing hardship of foot-travel through the October night, nobody could pity him much. There was every reason to suppose that such sudden exposure might be the cause of his immediate death. Oh yes, they would go out in search of him if "Herself" commanded them to do so, but the ungrateful creature had done nothing to deserve it. Why make such a fuss about his good-for-nothing, troublesome life?

Marcella had little hope that they would be able to recover him alive; and as she went out on the wild moor in the chill misty morning she felt as if she must have been living in a state of madness during the past month—an unhappy madness that had lost her a chance which could certainly never return to her. The hope, the expectation with which she had worked had been idle, fantastic, impossible. She ought to have denied her enemy her personal ministrations, and placed him under the watch of the police. Now he would die in some obscure corner.

While her mind thus writhed in its perplexity, and her heart smote her with passionate self-reproach, her thoughts were interrupted by the sight of a group of figures approaching slowly out of the distance. As they drew nearer, a little new hope sprang up in her. Here were the messengers returning, and they were carrying—was it merely the body of the missing patient, or was he returning to her to die? And yet, what did it matter if, at the last, he should refuse to speak? He was brought into the hospital and laid again in his bed. The doctor was hastily summoned, and the sufferer was restored to consciousness. He had broken a blood-vessel, and had swooned, but he was not dead. He had days, perhaps weeks, to live, thanks to those who had found him where he had fallen upon the way-side.

"You have been very hard on yourself, my man," said the doctor, when the patient feebly questioned him. "Why were you so mad as to run away and bring on this attack?"

"I thought I was well enough to go, and that it was time. I had given trouble enough. I suppose I am not going to give much more. What is the matter with me now?"

"I am sorry to tell you that you have been in consumption for months past. Is it possible that you did not know it? By exposing yourself as you have done you have hastened the end."

The patient reflected for some minutes, and then said,

"You are sure you are telling me the truth?"

"Certainly. I should have told you before, only I wanted to give you a chance. I am sorry you have taken the matter out of my hands. You cannot now live more than a week, I fear—though it is possible—"

When the doctor's ministrations were over, and he was turning to go away, the patient stopped him, saying,

"Look here, doctor, I suppose this is all as it ought to be. If you tell me I'm bound to go, why I don't see much to say against it. But there are one or two little matters I would like to put straight. Will you be good enough to send me a magistrate, and anybody else who ought to be present at an important confession? It's a matter for the public, and I mean to have everything fair and square, so that the law can pick no holes in it when I'm gone."

Marcella, who had been approaching the bed with something needed by the doctor, paused, and stood looking steadily at the patient. Had he really spoken, or was it a delusion that brought sounds to her ears which they had been straining to hear?

"Ay, lady," he said, "I'm going to do it for you. You have been good to me, that I will say, and for once in my life I'll do an honest turn to somebody."

CHAPTER XXIX.

SUNRISE.

MR. O'FLAHERTY of Mount Ramshackle and a brother magistrate were soon at the patient's bedside, accompanied by a sergeant of police and one of his men. The deposition made to them ran somewhat as follows:

"As I am a dying man, going before judgment, I declare that Mr. Bryan Kilmorey is innocent of all knowledge of the crime for which he is suffering penal servitude, and of which he was convicted chiefly on my testimony. I now acknowledge that testimony to have been false, and confess that I, James Barrett, shot with my own hand Mr. Gerald Ffrench Ffont on the night of the 10th of January, 188–. Bitter experience of landlordism in my family made me a Fenian while a lad, and of late years I have been the agent of a very active branch of that society. In the year 188– it was resolved to remove Mr. Ffont, who was a tyrannical landlord, and at the same time to punish Mr. Bryan Kilmorey for deserting from our ranks. We do not think it worth while to pursue every one who drops away from us; but Kilmorey's position had made him a precious prize for us,

and when he ratted it was resolved to do away with him. We did not want to have his strong influence working among the people by different means from ours. The 'Nationalist' party, which he had joined, is a difficulty in our road; and he was tried and condemned by our Council.

"At the same time we were anxious not to have too many murders on our hands, and it was resolved to get rid of Kilmorey by making him accountable for the shooting of Ffont. The lot to manage the affair fell upon me, as I had been found useful on several other occasions. It was I who lured him to the place; I who fired the shot that killed Ffont; I who gave the word to the police who went in pursuit of Kilmorey. It was suspected that one of our band tipped him the hint that enabled him to hide, and—well, that man is dead.

"Finding that Kilmorey was reprieved, and that in twenty years he would in all probability be at liberty, the society resolved to make an effort to work upon him through his wife, and persuade him to enlist with us again. It was thought that a desperate man, branded as a convict, might be influenced by hatred of the laws that had condemned him, and might be induced to give the rest of his life to our service. As I had succeeded so well in managing his affairs before, this second piece of business was intrusted to me. I got orders to remove the lad Mike, as a punishment of his opposition to us and a warning to others, and then to frighten Kilmorey's wife into agreeing to our plans. The penalty of refusal was to be death.

"I could make no impression on her; she was too plucky for me; and though I would have given her time myself, I had my orders. I didn't want to hurt her, but the thing had to be done. I had been hiding up in the mountain for a week, and hadn't been very comfortable; and when I felt ill for a couple of days before the time came to remove her, I thought it was only the hardships. That morning I was so bad that I said to one that was with me, and who has got away, that I believed I couldn't do it. He called me a coward, and reminded me that to fail of obeying my orders was death to myself and no escape for her. I went to the place, though I hardly knew what I was doing. I remember the sun getting as red as blood and as big as a mill-wheel, and the sea rising up and beginning to move over the land, and then the earth opened and I thought there was an earthquake. I remember nothing more about that time, but I saw her face all through my illness. It went hard with me to take all I've taken from her — I mean Mrs. Kilmorey — and know all that I knew. I would have got away if I could, for I daren't break my oath and tell on the society; but it's all right now, as I am bound to die. I will tell you more again, perhaps, when I've got time to think it over, but that will do for the present, I believe. All I will add now is, that if most landlords were like Mr. and Mrs. Kilmorey, I, and the like of me, would never have been what we are.

"(Signed), JAMES BARRETT,

"Of the Irish Invincibles, Chief 'Informer' on the Kilmorey trial."

Witnesses of this confession were the magistrates, the police, the doctor, Father Daly, Marcella, and one or two nurses.

"Now," said the doctor to the police, "you can watch your man here; "but mind, I tell you, he will never be able to leave this bed. Let him die in peace."

"Lady," said the dying man, who had scarcely taken his eyes from Marcella's shining face from the moment he began his confession, "you're going to your husband now, and I'll be dead when you come back. I have only one thing to beg from you more—that you will let me kiss your hand."

With a swift movement, Marcella came to his side and gave him her hand. "May God bless you," she said, "and forgive you, as I forgive you, for myself and him."

Then she turned slowly and walked towards the door, and passed out, stunned and blind, scarcely seeing where she was going till the others overtook her, and Father Daly caught her hand and led her. Mr. O'Flaherty took off his hat and congratulated her warmly, and assured her that Mrs. O'Flaherty would do herself the pleasure of calling at Crane's Castle to-morrow. The other magistrate murmured something to the effect that the whole county would do its best to make amends. Marcella bowed mechanically, but did not hear them, and Father Daly signed to them to let her alone, and go. When they were gone, she began to tremble violently, and stood still, and said,

"Oh, Father Daly, is it a dream? I have dreamed it so often. Is it only a dream? Don't tell me it is a dream, and that I have got to awake."

He stroked her shoulder, her hand, gently.

"No, dear, no dream, no dream; only God's love and God's mercy. We have trusted in that, and that is no dream. Now, my dear, courage, courage! Sorrow could not crush you, neither must joy. Remember Bryan—"

At the sound of his name a low cry broke from her, in which rapture and anguish were mixed, as if the new joy in her heart could not believe it had got that strong sanctuary all to itself by right, and was still constrained by the struggle of departing pain. And with that first lifting up of her voice the tears came, and she wept a torrent.

"Let me cry; it will be over in a moment."

"Cry away, my dear; it will wash out the last of the misery."

Half an hour later they were in Mrs. Kilmorey's room.

"Mother," said Marcella, walking up to the invalid, "our Bryan is coming home at once, do you know? He is coming home at once. Father Daly and I are going to meet him now."

A sort of white radiance illumined her face, though her manner was very quiet. Only for that marvellous light in her eyes and the curious thrill in her tones, one could not have guessed that anything extraordinary had happened.

But the change in her acted at once on the invalid, who looked up with a sudden glance of awakened intelligence.

"Coming?" she said; "coming? Ah yes, now I believe you, because you look like it. Many a time you said it, but your eyes told me at the same time it was not true. Is he coming to-night? Oh, why are we not all at Inisheen?"

The doctor, who had followed them, was listening to her.

"I believe it will be just as I fancied it might if he could come," he said to Father Daly. "His arrival will probably work a sudden cure."

Within an hour Marcella was ready to start on her journey to England. "We can be there as soon as a letter," she said, "and perhaps they would not give him a telegram. Let me go at once."

Father Daly was eager to accompany her, but reminded her that there might yet be a trial in store for her patience—a small trial, easily borne, after all that had come and gone.

"The law moves slowly," he said, "and doubtless many formalities will be necessary before the order for release can be forwarded to the prison."

"Then we must whisper him the news through the key-hole," said Marcella, with a sudden bright laugh, the novelty of which startled the listeners.

After all, there was a period of waiting outside the prison gates before even a whisper of the news was conveyed to the prisoner; but when the order for release came, Marcella was permitted to be the bearer of the happy tidings.

Kilmorey was reading in his cell, or trying to read, for his mind was disturbed by a haunting fear that all was not well at Distresna. He knew that the fever still lingered about the country, and that his wife was exposed to it; and he had been informed that there were letters from Ireland awaiting him, which had been withheld, and could not yet be delivered. He was not quite able to connect these two facts in his uneasy speculation, not seeing why the authorities should interfere to retard bad news from home, if such were in store for him; yet the interruption in his correspondence seemed ominous, and his imagination had free room to work in his solitude and suspense. He laid down his book and tried once again to reason himself out of his forebodings, when the sound of the key in his cell door concentrated his attention on itself as an occurrence quite out of rule at that hour of the morning. The next moment he had sprung to his feet with an exclamation of surprise and gladness, for Marcella was within a yard of him.

"My love, how have you come here? What extraordinary favor is this?"

She was looking so bright and bonny, her eyes shining, her lips quivering with joy, that she seemed to have stepped straight out of the old happy time before the trouble came. What cause had she now for such delight in merely an unexpected opportunity of seeing him? In proportion to his rapture would be the depth of her sorrow at having to leave him again when the hour of departure should strike. This thought passed through his mind as he held her in his arms; and then across it flashed another with growing brilliance—

a conviction that there was some more than ordinary cause for the happiness that irradiated her whole face and figure, that seemed to throb even in her very hands, and in the movement of her feet.

"What is it, Marcella? You have something to tell me. Tell it to me."

She tried to speak, and failed. Now that the moment was come, her voice was lost, and she stood dumb. She looked at him imploringly, and with a supreme effort brought forth at last the words which she had repeated to herself so often that the whole universe seemed to echo with them.

"Do you not know it?" she whispered. "Can you not guess it? You are free!"

The affair got into the papers a while, several paragraphs appeared drawing attention to it, one or two journals had even a leading article on the subject, while a controversy sprang up for a few days between anonymous letter-writers as to whether the testimony of informers was or was not a safe kind of evidence by which to obtain conviction on an Irish trial. The nine days' wonder came to an end, however, even before the expiration of the proverbial term. A few people talked of compensation for Mr. Kilmorey, who, when consulted, made the request that any compensation of which he might be thought deserving should be held over in trust for the next victim of criminal information. The subject was an unpleasant one for those who had been over-sure of the released convict's guilt, and there were a good many people who were ready to quote "no smoke without fire," and to grumble that a man who had once been in prison for murder could never be quite on a level with a man who had not.

Kilmorey and his wife had meanwhile returned to Ireland, received the delighted congratulations and welcomes of their people, and enjoyed the consolation of seeing the mother cured by the reappearance of her son, in accordance with the doctor's expectation. Italy is at present the scene of their hard won and scarcely hoped for happiness, yet they are far from entertaining the idea of becoming absentees; for Father Daly is already making preparations for their return to their home.

THE END.

BEN-HUR: A TALE OF THE CHRIST.

By Lew. Wallace. New Edition. pp. 552. 16mo, Cloth, $1 50.

Anything so startling, new, and distinctive as the leading feature of this romance does not often appear in works of fiction. . . . Some of Mr. Wallace's writing is remarkable for its pathetic eloquence. The scenes described in the New Testament are rewritten with the power and skill of an accomplished master of style.—*N. Y. Times.*

Its real basis is a description of the life of the Jews and Romans at the beginning of the Christian era, and this is both forcible and brilliant. . . . We are carried through a surprising variety of scenes; we witness a sea-fight, a chariot-race, the internal economy of a Roman galley, domestic interiors at Antioch, at Jerusalem, and among the tribes of the desert; palaces, prisons, the haunts of dissipated Roman youth, the houses of pious families of Israel. There is plenty of exciting incident; everything is animated, vivid, and glowing.—*N. Y. Tribune.*

From the opening of the volume to the very close the reader's interest will be kept at the highest pitch, and the novel will be pronounced by all one of the greatest novels of the day.—*Boston Post.*

It is full of poetic beauty, as though born of an Eastern sage, and there is sufficient of Oriental customs, geography, nomenclature, etc., to greatly strengthen the semblance.—*Boston Commonwealth.*

"Ben-Hur" is interesting, and its characterization is fine and strong. Meanwhile it evinces careful study of the period in which the scene is laid, and will help those who read it with reasonable attention to realize the nature and conditions of Hebrew life in Jerusalem and Roman life at Antioch at the time of our Saviour's advent.—*Examiner*, N. Y.

It is really Scripture history of Christ's time clothed gracefully and delicately in the flowing and loose drapery of modern fiction. . . . Few late works of fiction excel it in genuine ability and interest.—*N. Y. Graphic.*

One of the most remarkable and delightful books. It is as real and warm as life itself, and as attractive as the grandest and most heroic chapters of history.—*Indianapolis Journal.*

The book is one of unquestionable power, and will be read with unwonted interest by many readers who are weary of the conventional novel and romance.—*Boston Journal.*

Published by HARPER & BROTHERS, New York.

☞ *The above work sent by mail, postage prepaid, to any part of the United States or Canada, on receipt of the price.*

CONSTANCE F. WOOLSON'S NOVELS.

EAST ANGELS. 16mo, Cloth, $1 25.

ANNE. Illustrated. 16mo, Cloth, $1 25.

FOR THE MAJOR. 16mo, Cloth, $1 00.

CASTLE NOWHERE. 16mo, Cloth, $1 00. (*A New Edition.*)

RODMAN THE KEEPER. Southern Sketches. 16mo, Cloth, $1 00. (*A New Edition.*)

There is a certain bright cheerfulness in Miss Woolson's writing which invests all her characters with lovable qualities.—*Jewish Advocate*, N. Y.

Miss Woolson is among our few successful writers of interesting magazine stories, and her skill and power are perceptible in the delineation of her heroines no less than in the suggestive pictures of local life.—*Jewish Messenger*, N. Y.

Constance Fenimore Woolson may easily become the novelist laureate. —*Boston Globe.*

Miss Woolson has a graceful fancy, a ready wit, a polished style, and conspicuous dramatic power; while her skill in the development of a story is very remarkable.—*London Life.*

Miss Woolson never once follows the beaten track of the orthodox novelist, but strikes a new and richly loaded vein which, so far, is all her own; and thus we feel, on reading one of her works, a fresh sensation, and we put down the book with a sigh to think our pleasant task of reading it is finished. The author's lines must have fallen to her in very pleasant places; or she has, perhaps, within herself the wealth of womanly love and tenderness she pours so freely into all she writes. Such books as hers do much to elevate the moral tone of the day—a quality sadly wanting in novels of the time.—*Whitehall Review*, London.

PUBLISHED BY HARPER & BROTHERS, NEW YORK.

☞ HARPER & BROTHERS *will send the above works by mail, postage prepaid, to any part of the United States or Canada, on receipt of the price.*

VIRGINIA W. JOHNSON'S WORKS.

A SACK OF GOLD. A Novel. 8vo, Paper, 35 cents.

JOSEPH THE JEW. The Story of an Old House. 8vo, Paper, 40 cents.

MISS NANCY'S PILGRIMAGE. A Novel. 8vo, Paper, 40 cents.

THE CALDERWOOD SECRET. A Novel. 8vo, Paper, 40 cents.

THE NEPTUNE VASE. A Novel. 4to, Paper, 20 cents.

TULIP PLACE. A Novel. 16mo, Paper, 25 cents.

TWO OLD CATS. A Novel. 4to, Paper, 15 cents.

THE CATSKILL FAIRIES. Illustrated by ALFRED FREDERICKS. Square 8vo, Illuminated Cloth, Gilt Edges, $3 00.

Her novels are replete with dramatic incident; the style is clear and simple narration, with true insight into character.—*Brooklyn Times.*

"The Catskill Fairies" is a really charming collection of little stories, in which an attempt, and a successful one at that, is made to open up a vein of national fairy lore. There are twelve stories in all, told with much force and delicacy of style, together with a quaintness and a simplicity that are equally attractive and delightful. There is a playful humor, too, in the manner of telling these pretty tales that is not the least of their claims to attention. . . . The book is copiously and admirably illustrated by Alfred Fredericks, who here fully makes good his title to be considered the best book illustrator in the country. His pictures are not only fine in drawing and rich in effect, but they abound in character, thought, and originality.—*Saturday Evening Gazette*, Boston.

One of the most exquisitely appropriate volumes for the young that could be devised—exquisite in its paper, binding, typography, and illustrations, and equally so in the graceful, eventful, half-mysterious tales which it contains. Miss Johnson tells a fairy story to perfection—as if she believed it herself—and with a wealth of tricksome and frolic fancy that will delight the young and old alike. . . . Nor could anything be devised more apposite to the holidays, or more appropriate for a gift, than this charming book.—*Christian Intelligencer*, N. Y.

It is handsome in make-up, is beautifully illustrated, and is as interesting as could be desired. . . . Miss Johnson evidently understands juvenile literary needs.—*Brooklyn Eagle.*

PUBLISHED BY HARPER & BROTHERS, NEW YORK.

☞ *The above works sent by mail, postage prepaid, to any part of the United States or Canada, on receipt of the price.*

W. E. NORRIS'S NOVELS.

A discriminating public has lately become assured that Mr. Norris is a novelist from whom they have a right to expect much. Mr. Norris seems to have set out upon his literary career with the intention of writing slowly, perhaps not a great deal, and with an effort to be always at his best.—*Independent*, N. Y.

In humor and gentle pathos Mr. Norris shows resemblances to Trollope. He has studied Trollope with advantage. He has caught Trollope's genial manner in drawing people as they are.—*Athenæum*, London.

Mr. Norris's very clever and delightful books are almost the sole survival of the great period of English novels, and are a distinct boon to those readers whose taste was formed by Miss Austen and Thackeray.—*Lippincott's Magazine.*

A MAN OF HIS WORD, and Other Stories. 4to, Paper, 20 cents.

ADRIAN VIDAL. Illustrated. 4to, Paper, 25 cents.

HEAPS OF MONEY. 8vo, Paper, 15 cents.

HER OWN DOING. 16mo, Paper, 25 cents.

MADEMOISELLE DE MERSAC. 4to, Paper, 20 cents.

MATRIMONY. 4to, Paper. 20 cents.

NO NEW THING. 4to, Paper, 25 cents.

THAT TERRIBLE MAN. 12mo, Paper, 25 cents.

THIRLBY HALL. Illustrated by W. Small. 4to, Paper, 25 cents.

PUBLISHED BY HARPER & BROTHERS, NEW YORK.

☞ HARPER & BROTHERS *will send the above works by mail, postage prepaid, to any part of the United States or Canada, on receipt of the price.*

DAVID CHRISTIE MURRAY'S NOVELS.

Mr. Christie Murray is a kindly satirist, who evidently delights in the analysis of character, and who deals shrewdly, but gently, with the frailties of our nature. . . . The pages are perpetually brightened by quaintly humorous touches. Often in describing some character, or something that is commonplace enough, a droll fancy seems to strike the author, and forthwith he gives us the benefit of it. Consequently there is a spontaneity in his pen which is extremely fascinating. . . . We can only say generally that Mr. Murray's plot is sufficiently original, and worked up with enough of skill to satisfy any but the most exacting readers. We found ourselves getting duly excited before the *dénouement*. . . . Readers of Mr. Christie Murray's novels will know that he belongs to the school of Mr. Charles Reade. And it is no small praise to say that he has caught a fair share of the vigor and rapidity of that romancer. His characters, too, belong to the same category as those that figure in Mr. Reade's stories. They are drawn with a sufficient resemblance to nature to take a complete appearance of vitality so long as we are in the whirl of the plot, which is also what we feel about the characters of a good modern drama while we are watching its representation. . . . There is a certain alertness and vigor in the author's portraits which make them pleasant to meet with.—*The Saturday Review* (London).

A LIFE'S ATONEMENT. 4to, Paper, 20 cents.

A MODEL FATHER. 4to, Paper, 10 cents.

BY THE GATE OF THE SEA. 4to, Paper, 15 cents; 12mo, Paper, 15 cents.

CYNIC FORTUNE. 16mo, Paper, 25 cents.

FIRST PERSON SINGULAR. Illustrated. 4to, Paper, 25 cents.

HEARTS. 4to, Paper, 20 cents.

RAINBOW GOLD. 4to, Paper, 20 cents.

THE WAY OF THE WORLD. 4to, Paper, 20 cents.

VAL STRANGE. A Story of the Primrose Way. 4to, Paper, 20 cents.

PUBLISHED BY HARPER & BROTHERS, NEW YORK.

☞ HARPER & BROTHERS *will send any of the above works by mail, postage prepaid, to any part of the United States or Canada, on receipt of the price.*

ATLA:

A Story of the Lost Island. By Mrs. J. Gregory Smith, Author of "Dawn to Sunrise," etc. pp. 284. 16mo, Extra Cloth, $1 00.

A new history of the fabled Atlantis, in many particulars far exceeding in interest those which have gone before it on the same theme. It is delightful reading either for a winter evening or a summer's holiday, and ought to have a wide circulation.—*N. Y. Journal of Commerce.*

A tale that reads like one of reality. All who are curious on the subject will be fascinated by the fiction, and by its polished style of composition.—*Philadelphia Bulletin.*

An extremely clever picture of life as it might have been on the island of Atlantis.—*Rochester Morning Herald.*

An exceedingly ingenious and clever tale, that has at once the charm of mystery and romance.—*N. Y. Graphic.*

The style is full of charm, and the characters are depicted with equal skill and vividness. Readers of refined taste will find the book of abounding interest.—*Saturday Evening Gazette*, Boston.

It is like a fairy story in interest and in the oriental magnificence of its imagery, while not differing from history in the sober plausibility of the narrative presented. It is an exquisite product of the borderland that lies between fact and fancy.—*N. Y. Commercial Advertiser.*

The merit of the romance is marked; under the guise of fiction it teaches this, that the more we study the civilization of the remote past the more wonderful it appears to us to be.—*N. Y. Times.*

A very interesting story. The subject is peculiarly adapted to all that play of imagination and rich fancy which is calculated to invest this legend with so much of charm and interest. Mrs. Smith has employed these most excellently in the telling of her story, which the reader will find to be a very charming and fascinating one.—*Christian at Work*, N. Y.

A romance which has many elements which will charm the reader. Mrs. Smith succeeds in producing many striking, eloquent passages, and carries on her whole story evenly, and with force and skill. "Atla" will make the author's name known to a thousand readers to one who knew "Leola" or "Selma."—*Brooklyn Union.*

Published by HARPER & BROTHERS, New York.

☞ Harper & Brothers *will send the above work by mail, postage prepaid, to any part of the United States or Canada, on receipt of the price.*

ATLANTIS.

ATLANTIS: THE ANTEDILUVIAN WORLD. By Ignatius Donnnelly. Illustrated. 12mo, Cloth, $2 00.

Mr. Donnelly's theory is an ingenious one, and is well fortified by arguments drawn from geology and history, from prehistoric relics, from traditions, and from manners, languages, and customs of widely separated nations. His theory offers a plausible explanation for many puzzling discoveries of the philosophers, and his book will give a fresh impulse to historic and prehistoric research.—*Philadelphia Inquirer.*

Mr. Ignatius Donnelly has written a unique and interesting argument to prove that the legend of Atlantis is based upon fact, and that it tells of the first and one of the greatest of civilized nations, which a terrible convulsion of nature obliterated.—*Congregationalist*, Boston.

All of this is very startling, but the author has made out a case which, if not convincing, is at least interesting and wonderfully plausible. His book shows, throughout, wide reading, logical clearness, and careful thought, and the work cannot fail to interest by the vast accumulation of out-of-the-way information it contains.—*Saturday Evening Gazette*, Boston.

This is a most remarkable book, entertaining, instructive, and fascinating to a degree. . . . A book well worth reading. The world will never tire of the story of the lost Atlantis and of speculations in regard to it. It has been the theme of the poet and philosopher. Now it is brought to the test of science.—*Brooklyn Union-Argus.*

If any one should get the impression that Mr. Donnelly's book is a foolish one, he will make a great mistake. There is an immense amount of knowledge accumulated, and some of his views have much more beneath them than notions in science which have wide prevalence. Whatever may be thought of his conclusions, the facts he has assembled with regard to the Deluge and the several traditions concerning it, his comparisons of the Old and New World civilizations, his analysis of the mythologies of the Old World, and his discernment and selection of Atlantean colonies make up a marvellously interesting book.—*Christian Advocate*, N. Y.

It has a strange interest to the general reader as well as to scientific students.—*Evangelist*, N. Y.

He must have the credit, however, of giving to the public the most original volume of the season.—*The Congregationalist*, Boston.

The book contains matter food for thought from the first page to the last, and its subject is so consequential that, if its major propositions can be considered proven, some of the most perplexing problems which the history of the human race offers to the investigator will, for the first time since the revival of civilization, be put in the way of satisfactory solution. —*Evening Telegraph*, Philadelphia.

Published by HARPER & BROTHERS, New York.

☞ *The above work sent by mail, postage prepaid, to any part of the United States or Canada, on receipt of the price.*

UPLAND AND MEADOW.

A Poaetquissings Chronicle. By CHARLES C. ABBOTT, M.D. pp. x., 398. 12mo, Ornamental Cloth, $1 50.

Dr. Abbott studies most delightfully the question of whether birds remain with us during the winter; whether hibernation is as fixed a habit with any creature as is supposed. Then follow studies of the habits of marsh-wrens, grakles, red-birds, toads, humming-birds; and an autumn diary remarkably full of interest and with many delightfully poetical habits of expression, together with accounts of conversations with the country people so quaint and curious as to give a great personal interest to these studies. Any one with the slightest interest in natural history will be charmed with this book; and those who care very little for natural history in itself will find so much other matter that whoever and of whatever turn of mind takes up this book will not willingly lay it down.—*Christian Advocate*, N. Y.

We commend this book as inspiring, refreshing, and delightful in its record and humor both.—*Philadelphia Ledger and Transcript.*

The author has a *faculty* for using his eyes and ears to excellent advantage in his rambles over "Upland and Meadow," and a very entertaining way of recording what he sees and hears. . . . It is worth reading indeed. —*The Examiner*, N. Y.

Here is a modern Thoreau with an imagination the like of which Thoreau did not possess. Things happen to him in the most accommodating way, for they manage to give each story of bird or beast a point.—*N. Y. Times.*

Delightful reading for students and lovers of out-door nature. . . . Here the author discourses with the greatest charm of style about wood and stream, marsh-wrens, the spade-foot toad, summer, winter, trumpet-creepers and ruby throats, September sunshine, a colony of grakles, the queer little dwellers in the water, and countless other things that the ordinary eye passes by without notice. . . . The book may be heartily commended to every reader of taste, and to every admirer of graceful and nervous English.—*Saturday Evening Gazette*, Boston.

PUBLISHED BY HARPER & BROTHERS, NEW YORK.

☞ HARPER & BROTHERS *will send the above work by mail, postage prepaid, to any part of the United States or Canada, on receipt of the price.*

LATEST PUBLICATIONS

FROM THE PRESS OF

HARPER & BROTHERS.

MARY AND MARTHA. The Mother and the Wife of George Washington. By BENSON J. LOSSING, LL.D., Author of "Field-book of the Revolution," &c. Illustrated by Fac-similes of Pen-and-ink Drawings by H. Rosa. pp. xxii., 348. 8vo, Ornamental Cloth, $2 50.

VOYAGES OF A MERCHANT NAVIGATOR. Compiled from the Journals and Letters of the late Richard J. Cleveland, by his Son, H. W. S. CLEVELAND. With Portrait. 12mo, Cloth, $1 25.

CONTRIBUTIONS TO THE SCIENCE OF EDUCATION. By WILLIAM H. PAYNE, A.M., Professor of the Science and the Art of Teaching in the University of Michigan. pp. xiv., 358. 12mo, Cloth, $1 50.

THE ILIAD OF HOMER. Books XVI.–XXIV. With Explanatory Notes for the Use of Students in Colleges. By W. S. TYLER, D.D., Williston Professor of Greek in Amherst College. (In "Harper's Classical Series for Schools and Colleges.") pp. xvi., 420. 12mo, Cloth, $1 50.

INTO UNKNOWN SEAS; or, The Cruise of Two Sailor-Boys. By DAVID KER. Illustrated. pp. vi., 176. Square 16mo, Cloth, $1 00.

LOVE AND LUCK. The Story of a Summer's Loitering in the Great South Bay. By ROBERT B. ROOSEVELT. pp. 350. 16mo, Ornamental Cover, $1 00.

THE CHILDREN OF OLD PARK'S TAVERN. A Story of the South Shore. By FRANCES A. HUMPHREY. pp. 284. 16mo, Cloth, $1 00.

THE AMERICAN SALMON-FISHERMAN. By HENRY P. WELLS. Author of "Fly-Rods and Fly-Tackle." Illustrated. pp. iv., 166. 16mo, Cloth, $1 00.

THE LABOR PROBLEM. Plain Questions and Practical Answers. Edited by WILLIAM E. BARNS. With an Introduction by Richard T. Ely, Ph.D., and Special Contributions by James A. Waterworth and Fred Woodrow. pp. 330. 16mo, Cloth, $1 00.

FRANKLIN SQUARE LIBRARY. (*Latest Issues.*)

	CENTS.
AUTOBIOGRAPHY OF LEIGH HUNT	20
BOTH IN THE WRONG. A Novel. By Mrs. J. K. Spender	20
ANCIENT AMERICAN POLITICS. By Hugh J. Hastings. Edited by Hugh Hastings	30

☞ HARPER & BROTHERS *will send any of the above works by mail, postage prepaid, to any part of the United States or Canada, on receipt of the price.*

HARPER'S PERIODICALS.

HARPER'S MAGAZINE, One Year	**$4 00**
HARPER'S WEEKLY, One Year	**4 00**
HARPER'S BAZAR, One Year	**4 00**
HARPER'S YOUNG PEOPLE, One Year	**2 00**
HARPER'S FRANKLIN SQUARE LIBRARY, One Year, 52 Numbers	**10 00**
HARPER'S HANDY SERIES, One Year, 52 Nos.	**15 00**

The Volumes of the WEEKLY and BAZAR begin with the first Numbers for January, the Volumes of the YOUNG PEOPLE with the first Number for November, and the Volumes of the MAGAZINE with the Numbers for June and December of each year.

Subscriptions will be commenced with the Number of each Periodical current at the time of receipt of order, except in cases where the subscriber otherwise directs.

BOUND VOLUMES.

Bound Volumes of the MAGAZINE for *three years back*, each Volume containing the Numbers for Six Months, will be sent by mail, postage prepaid, on receipt of $3 00 per Volume in Cloth, or $5 25 in Half Calf.

Bound Volumes of the WEEKLY or BAZAR for *three years back*, each containing the Numbers for a year, will be sent by mail, postage prepaid, on receipt of $7 00 per Volume in Cloth, or $10 50 in Half Morocco.

HARPER'S YOUNG PEOPLE for 1881, 1883, 1884, and 1885, handsomely bound in Illuminated Cloth, will be sent by mail, postage prepaid, on receipt of $3 50 per Volume.

☞ *The Bound Volumes of* HARPER'S YOUNG PEOPLE *for* 1880 *and* 1882 *are out of stock, and will not be reprinted at present.*

ADVERTISING.

The extent and character of the circulation of HARPER'S MAGAZINE, HARPER'S WEEKLY, HARPER'S BAZAR, and HARPER'S YOUNG PEOPLE render them advantageous mediums for advertising. A limited number of suitable advertisements will be inserted at the following rates:—In the MAGAZINE, Fourth Cover Page, $1500 00; Third Cover Page, or First Page of advertisement sheet, $500 00; one-half of such page when whole page is not taken, $300 00; one-quarter of such page when whole page is not taken, $150 00; an Inside Page of advertisement sheet, $250 00; one-half of such page, $150 00; one-quarter of such page, $75 00; smaller cards on an inside page, per line, $2 00: in the WEEKLY, Outside Page, $2 00 a line; Inside Pages, $1 50 a line: in the BAZAR, $1 00 a line: in the YOUNG PEOPLE, Cover Pages, 50 cents a line. Average: eight words to a line, twelve lines to an inch. Cuts and display charged the same rates for space occupied as solid matter. Remittances should be made by Post-Office Money Order or Draft, to avoid chance of loss.

Address: HARPER & BROTHERS,

FRANKLIN SQUARE, NEW YORK.

Deacidified using the Bookkeeper process
Neutralizing Agent: Magnesium Oxide
Treatment Date:
SEP 1996
BOOKKEEPER
PRESERVATION TECHNOLOGIES, INC
111 Thomson Park Drive
Cranberry Twp., PA 16066
(412) 779-2111

THE LIBRARY OF CONGRESS

THE HECKMAN BINDERY INC
BOUND TO PLEASE
FEB. 69
N. MANCHESTER,
INDIANA

LIBRARY OF CONGRESS
00014851197